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Critics, Classrooms, and Commonplaces:

Literary Studies as a Disciplinary Discourse Community

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Critics, Classrooms, and Commonplaces:

Literary Studies as a Disciplinary Discourse Community

by

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Critics, Classrooms, and Commonplaces:

Literary Studies as a Disciplinary Discourse Community

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This dissertation aims to complicate current understanding of disciplinary discourse communities though an investigation of the disciplinary values of literary studies, a discipline that for a variety of reasons has been under-examined in "writing in the disciplines" research. The first half of the manuscript examines the assumptions imbedded in the professional rhetoric of literary studies. Adapting methodologies used in analyses of professional discourse by Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor, I analyze the stasis issues and special *topoi* appearing in the first volume of *PMLA* 1884-5 and in a more recent sample of the discipline's discourse, journal articles published between 1999 and 2001. These analyses demonstrate the rhetorically conservative and progressive functions special *topoi* serve in professional discourse, allowing literary scholars to argue for new directions for the profession by appealing to shared values and practices. They also suggest that, despite a currently pervasive ethos of anti-disciplinarity, the discipline is refashioning itself as a knowledge-building discourse

community. The second half investigates the previously unexamined role of these assumptions in a site that is simultaneously central to this discipline's work and low in its hierarchical structure: the frequently required undergraduate introductory literature course. I triangulate ethnographic observations of a large undergraduate literature class's meetings, textual analyses of a sample of students' essays, and questionnaires to explore the extent to which the special *topoi* of professional-level discourse are present in a class intended for non-majors. I also present the results of an interventional quasi-experiment that seeks to distinguish the weight given to the use of discipline-specific rhetorical strategies and more general stylistic strategies in evaluating undergraduate writing. Although the professor whose course was studied stated his course objective was to teach "general-purpose" argumentation, analysis of student papers and grades indicates the use of discipline-specific special *topoi* was rewarded, underscoring the situated nature of "good" writing. The results of these studies suggest that the literature course intended for non-majors may be a borderland of discourse communities and a site of value formation and conflict. Thus the boundaries of disciplinary discourse communities may be more complex and permeable than current descriptions of them relate.

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INTRODUCTION

I. Professional Discourse

Writing in the Disciplines and the Discipline of Literary Studies

Motivated by a recognition that not all "good" or effective writing follows the conventions of literary criticism, compositionists, long housed in departments of English, have called for research that makes explicit the conventions of academic discourse from a wide range of disciplines, especially those conventions considered transparent and tacitly transmitted. Mina Shaughnessy (1977) is frequently cited as the originator of this call, later echoed by Patricia Bizzell (1982), James Kinneavy (1983), David Bartholomae (1985), and Susan Peck MacDonald (1987, 1989), who argues such research can help students "adapt their writing to the shifting demands made upon them in different parts of the academy" (1989, p. 411). Answering these calls, analyses of recent and historically significant professional texts from the natural, social, and engineering sciences have revealed that generic conventions are far from static and their manipulation serves persuasive purposes (Bazerman, 1988; Dowdey, 1992; Fahnestock, 1986, 1999; Fahnestock & Secor, 1988; Gross, 1988; Halloran, 1984; MacDonald, 1987, 1989, 1994; C. Miller, 1992; Prelli, 1989). Additionally, observational studies of "experts" and "novices" have shed light on how disciplinary enculturation influences composing and reading processes (Blakeslee, 1993, 1997; Charney, 1993; Geisler, 1994; Haas, 1994; Herrington, 1985, 1992; G. Myers, 1985; Rymer, 1988; Winsor, 1996). Beyond informing undergraduate writing instruction in "writing across the

curriculum" and "writing in the disciplines" programs, studies such as these have contributed to discussion among rhetoricians, philosophers, and sociologists on the socially negotiated nature of knowledge and academic authority.

However, though writing about literature was once standard in composition coursework, the discipline of literary studies has been largely overlooked in this branch of research. The same recognition that not all rhetorically effective writing follows the conventions of literary analysis which motivated this research also led to decisions to remove imaginative, literary texts from "freshman composition" syllabi, a shift that began in the 1970s (Gamer, 1995) or even earlier (Steinberg, 1995; Tate, 1995). Replacing literature on the syllabi were often examples of nonfiction texts from across the curriculum and outside the curriculum into areas of public policy. Reasons offered for these modifications include a shift in the course's goals from consuming texts to producing them and the need to provide texts as models of the various kinds of writing students will produce during and after college (Lindemann, 1993). Additionally, many undergraduate "writing across the curriculum" and "writing in the disciplines" initiatives began to require coursework past "freshman composition" that includes writing instruction in a student's chosen major field. The shift in composition pedagogy away from writing about literature to public writing and writing in various disciplines can be seen as both sparked by and necessitating research into the rhetorical natures of discourses carried on outside departments of English. Simply put, composition instructors, long housed in departments of English, had a lot to learn about the kinds of writing practiced in other disciplines and arenas. This perceived need, combined with

the simultaneous and frequently turbulent political tensions between rhetoric and composition studies and literary studies during the former's re-emergence as a distinct field, helps explain why the rhetorical nature of discourse carried on in literary studies was largely ignored in this line of research and the rhetoric of the sciences and other professions and disciplines the favored focus.[1]

What We Know About "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism"

The work of rhetoricians Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor (Fahnestock & Secor, 1988, 1991; Secor, 1984) has been unique in its attempt to address this gap in the research. Fahnestock and Secor are among the first rhetoricians to concentrate in any depth on the rhetorical function and nature of literary criticism as the discourse of a professional community. Convinced of the power of Classical rhetorical theories of stasis and *topoi* as inventional tools in their classrooms (1988, p. 428), their research has focused on the power of these tools as instruments of audience analysis. With their analyses of professional literary criticism Fahnestock and Secor sought to contribute to

[1] Yet another possible reason for writing researchers' inattention to literary studies as a disciplinary discourse community may be the desire among some rhetoricians and compositionists to transform, rather than analyze, literary studies. Apparently motivated by desires to solve the recurrent "problems" instructors see in students' attempts to write about literature, some have made calls to radically modify the curriculum of traditional literature courses. Michael Wentworth (1987) suggests the problems caused by a teacher's unstated assumption of the "inherent value" in writing about literature and a student's propensity to "circumvent a direct response… by retelling the story, the poem, the novel, or the play in question" (p. 155) should be solved by transforming the literature class into a composition class which uses literature as a springboard of ideas for writing personal narratives and re-writing literature in different settings or from different points-of-view. Toby Fulwiler (1988) suggests having students in these classes use literary readings as models to compose poems and stories, and the anthology he co-edited with Art Young, *When Writing Teachers Teach Literature: Bringing Writing to Reading* (1995), seems to have been compiled in this spirit. More recently, Rosa Eberly (2000) advocates, over "traditional literary criticism and English studies pedagogies," using literary texts as "inventional prompts for discussion about various publics and their possible reactions to the texts in question" (p. 170) in order to facilitate students' participation in the deliberative public spheres of discourse concerning the texts.

the then budding attention to the nature of literary argument by literary theorists such as Cary Nelson, Wayne Booth, Stanley Fish, Jonathan Culler, and Terry Eagleton (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 76). Drawing on the work of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintillian, Stephen Toulmin, and Chaim Pereleman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, they argued that the most frequent rhetorical forum of literary criticism is epideictic and that the most frequent stasis issues that literary criticism addresses are existence, definition, and evaluation and that several common and special *topoi* (or *loci* following Perelman) typically bespeak the arguments' underlying assumptions.

Fahnestock and Secor derived their conclusions from samples of articles drawn from the January 1986 *PMLA* (Fahnestock & Secor, 1988), the October 1984 *PMLA* (Secor, 1984), and a group of articles from "a selection of journals of established reputation" published between 1978 and 1982 (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 77). Prior to their work, James Sosnoski (1979), a literary scholar, had applied Toulmin's conception of warrants in analyses of articles on James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to expose the differing "reading warrants," each the theoretical lens of different critical schools of thought, which lead to conflicting readings of the same passages.[2] And Charles Bazerman (1981), interested primarily in viewing literary argument as a foil to scientific argument, contrasted some assumptions underpinning one article of literary criticism with a molecular biology article and a sociology article, finding the literary criticism to be more particularistic, idiosyncratic, and personal. In her analysis of problem definition and sentence subjects, Susan Peck MacDonald (1987,

1989, 1992, 1994) found scholarly discourse in the fields of psychology and history to be more likely to highlight research methods and warrants than the written discourse of Renaissance New Historicist scholars. Since Fahnestock and Secor conducted their analyses, Michael Carter's (1992) fuller characterization of literary criticism as private epideictic sought to explain the virulent attacks literary scholarship faces periodically in the popular media. And George Pullman (1994) sketched several possible special *topoi* of literary interpretation in his argument to reinvigorate invention in composition and thus reconfigure the institutional subordination of composition to literature. However, Pullman's evidence of his suggested literary special *topoi*, "intention (or anti-intention), structure, context, influence, origin, significance, implication, sublimation, signs of ideological issues and conflicts, form and substance, ambiguity, indeterminacy, etymology, figurality" (p. 380), is anecdotal and, as he acknowledges, he does not attempt to adequately distinguish which *topoi* are currently favored in the field's discourse and which have receded in prominence.

A commonality running through these investigations of the rhetoric of literary criticism is the comparison of literary criticism to the discourse of other academic disciplines, particularly scientific disciplines. Even Sosnoski contrasts the seemingly infinite multiplicity of critical interpretations of any given text with the concept of falsifiability of scientific methodologies (1979, p. 43). Fahnestock and Secor's analyses contrast literary criticism's epideictic functions with the clearly more proposal and

[2] His description of these "reading warrants" is very similar to a special *topos* Fahnestock and Secor (1991) labeled the paradigm *topos*.

action-oriented implications of scientific discourse. Instead of having significant consequences for the lives of those outside of the disciplinary discourse community, Fahnestock and Secor portray literary criticism as the value-celebrating sermons of an enclosed religious community (1991, p. 94). Carter's (1992) emphasis on the private nature of literary criticism's epideictic that tends to baffle readers from the broader public supports this understanding. Bazerman's characterization of literary criticism as particularistic and personal as opposed to the additions to a communal knowledge that scientific texts present (1981, p. 378) and MacDonald's (1992, 1994) finding that scholarly discourse in the fields of psychology and history is more likely to highlight research methods and warrants than the discourse of Renaissance New Historicist scholars further contribute to an understanding of literary criticism as an isolated enterprise entirely different in methodology and purpose from scientific discourse.

Yet despite Fahnestock and Secor's acknowledgement that their work in this area is a preliminary step in an examination of historically variable discourse, little else has been done to develop this line of research. Moreover, Fahnestock and Secor's analyses of literary criticism, conducted almost two decades ago, deserve to be reexamined in light of some significant changes that have occurred in the field of literary studies.

Literary Studies and Professionalism

Heightening the compositonists' call for needed rhetorical analyses of the discourse of literary scholars are literary scholars themselves who wish to bridge a gap they perceive between their current scholarly and pedagogical practice by more

consciously sharing their methodological practices with students. Gerald Graff's (1987; 1992; 1995; 1996) influential proposal to "teach the conflicts" encourages professors to share and address the issues debated in their professional discourse community with students for many reasons, including his perception that the "climate of ideological contention in the university" may be "a sign of democratic vitality" (1994, p. 26) and that the issues currently contested among literary scholars and the techniques of analysis they employ are pertinent to students' "real-life situations," even those who do not go on to pursue literary study as a career (1995, p. 331). Graff's arguments for and refinements of his proposal indicate that he considers the discourse conventions and vocabularies of literary scholars as inextricably linked to the content of their debates and should thus be introduced to students in keeping with Bizzell's (1992) call for demystification through socializing students into academic discourse and Kenneth Bruffee's (1993) call for the productive collaborative learning that can take place in this site of discourse transition and negotiation (Graff, 1995, pp. 328-9).

In many ways Graff's proposal can be seen as in accord with other calls not only to introduce current literary theory to undergraduates but to invite students to engage in critical argument. Some of the professors of literature to make such calls include Robert Scholes (1985), Jody Norton (1994), David Gershom Myers (1994), James Reiter (1995), Linda Peterson (1995), Andrew Campbell (1997) and Danuta Fjellestad (1999) and the contributors to anthologies such as *Bridging the Gap: Literary Theory in the Classroom* (Davies, 1994), *Practicing Theory in Introductory College Literature Courses* (Cahalan & Downing, 1991), and *Writing and Reading Differently:*

Deconstruction and the Teaching of Composition and Literature (Atkins, Johnson, & Comley, 1985). Anthologies of essays on literary theory intended for use in undergraduate courses further support viewing undergraduate literature instruction as an introduction to the professional discourse community of literary scholars. Such anthologies include *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Lentricchia & McLaughlin, 1995) and *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature* (Richter, 1994), an anthology which specifically seeks to facilitate Graff's proposal, as well as editions of texts published with criticism that would facilitate Graff's suggested approach, such as the recent editions of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1995) and *The Tempest* (2000) edited by Graff and James Phelan. Many recent textbooks designed for introductory literature coursework likewise encourage this view (Barnet, Berman, Burton, Cain, & Stubbs, 2000; Barnet & Cain, 2000; Callaghan & Dobyns, 1996; Charters, 1995; Jacobus, 1996; Kirszner & Mandell, 2001; Meyer, 2001; Roberts, 1999; Roberts & Jacobs, 1998), though the frequent relegation of the material introducing theoretical approaches to an appendix can send a half-hearted and easily overlooked message.

Of course, advocacy of a model of pedagogy based on participation in current critical debates is not universal among literary scholars. While supporting the infusion of current theory into pedagogical practice, some professors oppose the implication that all theoretical approaches are equal that the "teaching the conflicts" model implies and advocate instead for a pedagogy rooted in one theoretical approach, such as the Marxist influenced transformative pedagogy as described by Paulo Feire (1993), Henry Giroux

(1981; 1983; 1992; Arnonowitz & Giroux, 1985), and Evan Watkins (1989). Patricia Harkin (1987), William Spanos (1993), Lynette Felber (1996), and Don Bialostosky (1999) object to the potential they see in Graff's proposal for ideologically conservative positions to co-opt the debate. Carl Freedman (1994) criticizes Graff's proposals for their lack of attention to how "the academy in general and the literary academy in particular currently help to reproduce—but also potentially to resist—the relations of oppression that govern the society at large" (p. 60). In a related vein, several scholars follow Foucault in analyzing the mechanisms of control in academic disciplinarity and consequently see socializing students into the disciplines as perpetuating power structures that ought to be challenged. Sosnoski (1994; 1995) critiques the modernist legacies of scientism and objectivity lurking within disciplinary practices in literary and cultural studies. He, David Downing (1995), and Harkin (1987) object to the culture of argument, competition, and refutation Graff's proposal encourages because it is, they claim, antifeminist.[3] However, though Harkin (1987) is relieved to see Graff modify some terms of his proposal from "argue" to "dramatize" in later descriptions (p. 86), Bialostosky (1999) objects to this shift because dramatization of conflicts suggests Graff is less interested in "enfranchising previously excluded others to participate in these conflicts or in expanding the claims of the humanities to include political and

[3] Instead of assigning argumentative writing, Downing and Sosnoski (1995) advocate asking students to write personal narratives. Other features of their preferred "postdisciplinary" pedagogy include avoiding the term "students" and using instead "collaborators" (p. 280), countering "the academic ethos that splits intellect from emotion" (p. 277), not assigning grades, discouraging competition, while also, and without examining the potential contradictions, encouraging research and publication and discussing and applying theories collaborators have learned in their other classes (p. 280).

disciplinary territory unclaimed by conservative scholarly or aesthetic programs" (pp. 394-5). Yet at the same time Graff's proposals are criticized by conservative scholars such as Harold Fromm (1994) for their "hidden political agenda" (p. 72) to insert a leftist orthodoxy of theory into a central position in the undergraduate curriculum. Meanwhile, Jane Hedley and Jo Ellen Parker (1991), John Trimbur (1995), and Bruce Fleming (2000) would rather, particularly in introductory coursework, professors not see students as novices to a professional discipline and instead work with them on developing more generalizable critical thinking and reading skills that the humanities somehow uniquely foster.

Stanley Fish (1985) characterizes these attacks on disciplinarity and professionalism made by scholars from both the political left and right as attacks on rhetoric of the kind evidenced in Aristotle's disdain for style and preference for geometrical proofs, in other words, the age old Western quarrel between rhetoric and philosophy. It comes as no surprise to Fish that scholars on the right disdain professionalism in this way, as this is consistent with a traditional, conservative, essentialist view of Truth. It is the anti-professionalism displayed by the scholars on the left, who "if anything," according to Fish, tend "to be the more shrill" in their indictments, that so amazes Fish because it "involves a forgetting of one's own declared principles" (p. 98) of poststructuralism. Politically left scholars who censure professionalism, Fish argues, are contradicting their own belief in the socially constructed nature of knowledge, truth, and selfhood by assuming the artificial or manufactured conventions and motives of professional discourse are in some way

subversive of real, genuine truths and selves (p. 103). Fish goes on to argue that this belief in an autonomous, entirely free self is part of "the story the rising or bourgeois class tells itself" (p. 105), and one that the professional continually attempts to "mediate and ameliorate" while in "the context of purposes, motivations, and possibilities that precede and even define him" (p. 106). Thus, "far from being a stance taken at the margins or the periphery, anti-professionalism is the very center of the professional ethos" (p. 106).

Whether or not this is the case for all professions, there is evidence to suggest that at least a discomfort with professional and disciplinary apparatuses is prevalent among literary scholars. In addition to Sosnoski, Downing, and Harkin's outright objections to the disciplinary apparatuses of exams, grades, argument, and hierarchy, Richard Ohmann's (1996) widely influential *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* declared "our scheme of professional organization is destructive of community" (p. 12). Ohmann articulated an exasperation with the tying of professional prestige and job security exclusively to the publication of material which "drops quickly into a permanent non-circulating file, unassimilated, and even unread except by a corps of specialist colleagues and by unusually diligent committees on promotion and tenure" (p. 13). For Ohmann, literary study is distinctly different from scientific study in that the goal of literary study "is not the accumulation of new knowledge" but "the fostering of literary culture and consciousness" (p. 13), and thus the profession's emphasis on new publication is mismatched to its true purpose. But in addition to fostering literary culture, it becomes clear that for Ohmann another goal of literary study is the promotion

of social justice through social change, and there again he sees the professionalism of literary studies thwarting this goal. By acting to "enhance the professional self-image of their members," English departments are "more conservative than they might be in using the considerable powers they possess. They serve the discipline and its traditions and respond to social change only within that framework. In a pinch, they will preserve what is familiar, while adding the new as necessary, in convenient packages" (p. 227). Fish (1985) cites Ohmann as an exemplar of the politically left scholar embracing an inconsistent belief in anti-professionalism; his desire for access to and transmission of a "literary culture and consciousness" unmediated by professional discourse seems particularly "right-wing" (p. 101) to Fish. And yet, Ohmann's frustrations and embarrassments concerning professional apparatuses seem to have resonated with many others in the discipline.

Historicizing Disciplining Literature

Arising out of this frustration, as well an interest in poststructuralist critique of disciplinarity, literary scholars have recently given a great deal of attention to the histories and genealogies of their field (Court, 1998; Eagleton, 1983; Frantzen, 1990; Graff, 1987; Mathieson, 1975; McMurtry, 1985, T. P. Miller, 1990; Ohmann, 1996; Parker, 1981; Scholes, 1998; Shumway, 1994; Vanderbilt, 1986). It is commonplace among them to locate the beginning of academic literary study in the U.S. in the late nineteenth century, when the professional apparatuses of specialized methods and objects of study, hierarchies, accreditation polices, organizations, and publications did indeed seem to suddenly take hold. "Literature" at this moment denoted a far broader

category than novels, plays, short stories, and poems. "Literature" meant all letters--the products of the printing press: pamphlets, broadsheets, newspapers, as well as books. What we now demarcate as "literature" circulated among these letters as epideictic discourse intended to teach and delight (Clark & Halloran, 1993, p. 2) but was otherwise largely undifferentiated from political and scientific discourse. "Literature" was what the literate were acquainted with, and their shared "cultural literacy" (Ross, 1996, p. 404) both prepared and facilitated their participation in what Habermas termed a literary public sphere (Warner, 1990, p. 122). Thus poems, stories, and novels written in English were part of a public realm of letters, discussed in literary societies and publications, but not initially a central concern of schoolwork where Greek and Latin predominated. For us to understand the role such works played in the public realm of letters, we need to exercise reading strategies much different from those we have inherited from our institutionalized study, and such recovery projects attempting to read early American fiction and poetry in the context of the literary public sphere in which they circulated have been undertaken by Jane Tompkins (1985) and William Dowling (1990).

Many of the recent accounts of the development of this discipline seek to explain why some would be motivated to submit literary study to discipline and specialization. Jo McMurtry (1985) attests to the need of some "men of letters" for institutionalized support to sustain their critical and learned endeavors and way of life in an industrial age. In a similarly economically minded vein, Terry Eagleton (1983) points to the practical utility for students of vernacular over Classical languages. Arthur

Applebee (1974) and Graff (1987) uncover the belief, held by proponents of professionalization, in the ability of the philological study of modern languages to provide rigor and increase "mental discipline." McMurtry argues the rise of science as a separate, specialized study showed the path philology should take to achieve legitimization, while Eagleton (1983, p. 22), Ohmann (1996), and Robert Scholes (1998) argue that the weakening hold of religion on the popular mind left a void for English studies to fill. In particular, Eagleton, points to the perception among a growing industrially-supported middle class that they needed access to the cultural capital familiarity with literature brings, and the perception among an established elite that they needed to "humanize" this growing middle class by training them in appreciation of elite discourse instead of production of new and potentially antagonistic discourse. Further, Trevor Ross (1996) points to the commodification of old texts by deceased authors encouraged by recently established copyright laws as facilitating the discipline's canon formation. And lastly, Graff, Allen Frantzen (1990), and Reginald Horsman (1981) point to the desire to celebrate nationalism and racial superiority as a strong motivating factor in the development of a discipline which celebrates a racial heritage in each tracing of an etymology.

Though these disciplinary histories have provided an understanding of the evolving contexts for scholarly work in this field, no diachronic analyses of the development of the rhetorical conventions of literary criticism have been performed. Of the sometimes conflicting material and cultural conditions that these accounts depict as encouraging the professionalization of literary study, several led to the use of scientific

discourse communities as structural models. Historical studies of the rhetoric of science that have looked at disciplinary discourse communities' developments over time (Bazerman, 1988; Gross, 1988; Halloran, 1984; C. Miller, 1992; Prelli, 1989) have revealed useful information about the development and purposes of genres, indicating that conventions are far from static and serve rhetorical needs and goals. Yet despite Bazerman's (1988) observation that "current writing practices (in conventional, interactional, and epistemological dimensions) build on a history of practice and speak to a historically conditioned situation" (1988, pp. 4-5), no investigations into the development of these practices in literary studies have been conducted. The field's rhetorical variability, or unacknowledged stability, may be one source of confusion that novices face when entering its "conversation."

Is There a Community in This Discipline?

In contrast to the early scientific character of professional literary study, Fahnestock and Secor's analysis of journal articles published between 1978 and 1986 portrays literary criticism as the value-celebrating sermons of an enclosed religious community (1991, p. 94). Bazerman's characterization of literary criticism, based on his analysis of an article from a 1978 *PMLA*, as particularistic and personal as opposed to the additions to a communal knowledge that scientific texts present (1981, p. 378) and MacDonald's (1992, 1994) finding that scholarly discourse in the fields of psychology and history is more likely to highlight research methods and warrants than the discourse of Renaissance New Historicist scholars (published between 1983 and 1988) further contribute to an understanding of literary criticism as an isolated

enterprise that, unlike scientific discourse, is "not knowledge-building" (MacDonald, 1992, p. 556). However, as almost any literary scholar will tell you, literary criticism has changed, self-consciously, a great deal since the late 1970s and early 1980s, most notably due to the influx and influence of European works of poststructuralist theory published in translation since then. Have these noted surface changes, from philology's scientism to Poststructuralism's deconstruction of New Criticism, had a significant impact on the more submerged assumptions and methodologies, the stases and special *topoi*, of discourse in literary studies? Or are there elements of a rhetoric of literary studies that provide a continuity and cohesiveness to an otherwise diverse and divisive discourse community? In other words, is this a discourse community that repeatedly dismantles and remakes itself through revolutionary rhetoric, or is there a somewhat steady skeletal structure of collective values and assumptions on which the community builds its new discourse?

II. Student Discourse

What We Know About the Teaching of the Rhetoric of Literary Studies

It is a rather large leap from arguments for and against the deliberate introduction of the rhetoric of the professional disciplinary discourse community to students to many students' experience of actual classrooms. Perhaps as a result of the frustration and embarrassment Ohmann articulated, there is evidence to suggest that few in the field share Graff's enthusiasm for deliberately imparting the discourse conventions of their discipline to students. Patricia Sullivan's (1991) surveys and case

studies exploring the writing instruction English graduate students receive in their coursework indicated a pervasive suspicion and lack of awareness among literature professors of the rhetoricity of their own professional discourse. In this way, these professors are not unlike scholars in the natural and social sciences (see Charney, 1993). As a result of this suspicion and lack of awareness, Sullivan found English graduate students were offered little to no instruction on the processes of research and writing expected of them in their courses; even what literary criticism that was assigned was not explicitly discussed as models for their writing. Sullivan's interviews with professors revealed that, in fact, this lack of instruction, intervention, and modeling was intentional. The professors she interviewed "explicitly stated that such processes cannot or ought not to be taught because discussion of the writing task would mean intervening in the writing process either in superfluous or counter-productive ways" (p. 94). Reasons the professors offered for this view included the beliefs that "graduate students already know about such things," that "students learn the conventions of critical discourse 'from their reading rather than having them spelled out,'" and that teaching discursive practices would "'inhibit students' creativity' and induce them to write 'formulaic stuff'" (p. 294). However, counter to these views, Sullivan found the graduate students of her study struggled a great deal, and to varying degrees of success, with the problems of invention and argumentation their writing assignments presented them.

Similarly, in one of the few studies of undergraduate student discourse in this field, Anne Herrington's (1988) observations of a course, interviews with its professor

and students, and inductive taxonomy of the claims and warrants the students used in their writing, combined with the professor's grading, revealed that much of the methodology for learning to read and write "like an English major" was provided implicitly, with students' ability to infer these methods varying in success. However, Herrington did not look for relationships between writing by students and the writing that literature professors typically contribute to the discourse of their field. Though she analyzes how these students' writing is influenced by their professor's manner of conducting class, she does not connect the professor's manner to the assumptions the professor likely shares with her disciplinary discourse community.[4] And yet the values of complexity and irreducibility Herrington observed in the professor's manner seem likely to be in concert with the results of analyses of this professional discourse.

It at least seems clear that graduate student coursework should be an occasion for training in professional discourse conventions, however tacit that training may be in practice. But, in light of the lively debate among literature professors on the nature of undergraduate coursework in literature, the place for professional training in this site is far less clear. In practice, are the kinds of rhetorical features Fahnestock and Secor (1988; 1991; Secor, 1984) and MacDonald (1987; 1989; 1992; 1994) identified in the

[4] Interestingly, Herrington's (1985; 1992) analyses of undergraduate chemical engineering and anthropology courses do suggest connections between the professors' methods of conducting class and the "intellectual activities, social roles, and purposes of writing" (1985, p. 331) of their professional disciplinary discourse communities. I speculate that this difference in Herrington's approach to the discipline of literary studies stems from the pervasive assumption that undergraduate literature coursework contributes to a liberal arts education that helps produce non-discipline-specific, generalizable, and transferable writing skills. Likewise, the long and close association of the fields of rhetoric and composition and literary studies may contribute to a perception among researchers interested in the rhetoric of academic disciplines that they are best suited to evaluate the rhetorical success of writing in literary studies.

professional discourse present and valued in the discourse of undergraduate classrooms? Or are undergraduate literature courses not introductions to a discipline but something else, such as a component of a liberal arts education which provides, as scholars such as Fleming (2000) and Hedley and Parker (1991) would like it to, "a fuller awareness of oneself and the world" (Hedley, 1991, p. 24)?

It would seem unlikely that a professor's perception of the value of studying literature would radically change when leaving the journal article she is working on in her office to lead an undergraduate literature course. And yet, thus far only articles in professional journals have been examined in analyses of the rhetoric of this disciplinary discourse community. Notions of the boundaries of disciplinary discourse communities may be more complex and permeable than current descriptions of them relate. Because many rhetorical features of a discourse community such as special *topoi* are more often than not shared and transmitted tacitly among members, instructors may be unaware of not only their use of the rhetorical conventions of their field, but the extent to which they are implicitly encouraging their students, even first and second-year non-majors, to invoke them, too. This suggests that the arguments against introducing students to discipline-specific ways of knowing and writing may be easier made than put into practice. Such introductions, within the current structure of academic institutions, may be unavoidable and thus more problematic in the ways that concern Sosnoski.

MacDonald (1987, 1989) suggests that "the formal features that vary from one discipline to another (e.g., use of the third person or the passive) are visible enough to cause less trouble for inexperienced writers than the more internalized, implicit

assumptions that exist within disciplines" (1987, p. 315) and argues that the loosely defined problems engaged by academic writing in literary studies present unique challenges to undergraduates. Though MacDonald extrapolates consequences and recommendations for undergraduate instruction from analyses of professional-level discourse, researchers have not systematically studied the role of professional-level discourse in an undergraduate literature course. As has been done in the sciences, we need observational studies of literary studies to address possible intersections and disparities between professional discourse conventions and students' practices.

Do some problems that literature instructors repeatedly identify in undergraduate writing result in part from not making the values behind the special *topoi* of their discipline clear?[5] Or, as particularly may be the case when the course is intended for non-majors, might a student's rejection of these values manifest itself as "poor writing"?

Student Discourse as Either "Liminal" or "Predisciplinary"

Cheryl Geisler (1994) and Barbara Walvoord and Lucille McCarthy (1990), in their analyses of students' introductions to philosophy, business, biology, history, and psychology, as well as Herrington's (1985; 1992) studies of students writing in chemical engineering and anthropology courses, provide rich potential models for the

[5] Interestingly, many "problems" that literature instructors perceive their students face when writing about literature seem less frequently ones of grammar or "basic writing" and more frequently lack of understanding of the tactics, goals, and values of discipline-specific discourse. Some cited "problems" are students' overuse of plot summary (Herrington, 1988; Self, 1988; Wentworth, 1987), lack of textual reference (Rawlins, 1980), and lack of understanding of the "value" of literature "which can be discovered by critical reading" (Thompson, 1989, p. 37). For these instructors, it appears to some degree that inculcating discipline-specific discourse conventions and values is a goal of their pedagogical practice.

needed research on literary studies. In these studies student discourse is treated as "liminal discourse," a term I am using to describe discourse at the boundaries of disciplinary communities--discourse that, in the case of literary studies, is produced by members at the lowest level of the discipline's hierarchy in vast amounts each semester.[6] Geisler's writing protocol analyses revealed interesting significant differences between the writing processes and assumptions of novices and experts in the field of philosophy, with the experts she studied appearing more prone to see their writing as participating in a conversation. However, Geisler's choice of graduate students to represent expertise in her study could also be interestingly supplemented and complicated by protocols from those further progressed along the disciplinary hierarchy. Similarly, the writing prompt Geisler provided, which encouraged the writers to address a general, non-academic magazine-reading audience, could be fruitfully modified so that it asked the experts and novices to address a discipline-specific audience. Academic discourse may prove to be not as monolithic an entity as Geisler portrays it—differences between disciplines may prove to be as vast as the differences Geisler sees between "lay" and "academic" discourses. For instance, in her studies of discourse in chemical engineering and anthropology at the undergraduate level, Herrington (1985, 1992) described how even within one discipline, students are

[6] I find the image of an inverted cone useful in understanding the concept of discourse communities as defined by John Swales (1990), Patricia Bizzell (1992), and Anne Beaufort (1997). The roundness of the cone's base nicely matches Bizzell's (1982) diagram depicting overlapping and sometime competing discourse communities to which one individual may belong. However, the third dimension aspect of the cone adds to this image the reality of the hierarchical nature of many discourse communities, and, for academic disciplinary communities, represents the great number of people who participate at the periphery, lower level, and the increasingly smaller number who participate at the higher, more specialized levels.

encouraged to address different audiences with their writing, use different lines of reasoning, and assume different writer roles.

In another study further facilitating such comparison of expectations across disciplines for undergraduates, Walvoord and McCarthy's (1990) involvement of the four professors whose courses they studied resulted in making explicit previously tacit expectations about the roles the professors expected their students to assume in their writing. Interestingly, all the professors of their study expected their students to assume the role of "professional-in-training" as opposed to a text processor or layperson. However, the business and biology professors of their study defined this role as a novice entering the entry level of a disciplinary hierarchy while the history and psychology professors "saw their students more broadly as preparing for professions in a variety of fields and for participation in society as citizens" (1990, p. 9).

The implicit expectations Walvoord and McCarthy exposed could be usefully traced in undergraduate literature courses. The reality of many students' experience may be further from Graff's proposal and closer to the experience of the students in the history and psychology courses of Walvoord and McCarthy's study. Christopher Diller and Scott Oates (2002) describe their experience as writing instructors collaborating with instructors in a liberal arts program during which they discovered that the writing practices expected of students, especially first-year college students, were "predisciplinary" and incommensurable with their "writing in the disciplines" approach. Similarly, Carmen Schmersahl and Byron Stay's (1992) survey of writing practices across the campus of one small liberal arts college revealed that student writing was

routinely not expected to participate in disciplinary conversations nor follow disciplinary conventions. Assuming Diller and Oates and Shmersahl and Stay's observations are not highly exceptional, undergraduate literature instruction, a frequent core requirement of a liberal arts curriculum, may be a "predisciplinary" experience for undergraduates in which they are not encouraged to enter and contend with the discourse of a disciplinary community. Such an experience would be commensurate with Ohmann's desire for such courses to foster a "literary culture and consciousness" apart from the concerns of professionalization and Hedley as well as Parker, Trimbur, and Flemming's wish that they impart general critical thinking skills.

To be sure, just as there are "writing about literature" textbooks facilitating Graff's "teach the conflicts" model of introducing disciplinary discourse, there are also recent "writing about literature" textbooks claiming to facilitate improvement of students' general critical thinking and writing skills (Manlove, 1989; McMahan, Day, & Funk, 1996).[7] Moreover, many of the textbooks that cover professional critical approaches do so in appendices or chapters added to largely unchanged previous editions (see Barnet, 1971; Barnet & Cain, 2000; Roberts, 1983, 1999). Thus, often these textbooks offer conflicting advice to students, presenting themselves as rhetorics with insights for improving writing in general and in the context of a specific discourse community, with frequently the greatest emphasis on writing in general. Edgar V. Roberts (1999), for instance, prefaces his textbook on writing critical analyses of short stories, poems, plays, and films with a declaration that students' development of the

skills needed to succeed at these writing tasks will also improve their writing in their other coursework in academic disciplines as diverse as the natural sciences and social sciences (pp. xiv and 16). And well beyond coursework, according to Roberts, the study of literature can improve multiple facets of students' lives, helping them develop compassion, maturity, appreciation, and shape their goals and values, even enabling them "to develop perspectives on events occurring locally and globally" and thereby giving them "understanding and control" (pp. 2-3). Literature, claims Roberts, "makes us human" (p. 3), and in these bold assertions he may well articulate many of the beliefs that support the placement of literary study in the center of "predisciplinary" general education curricula.

Overview of Dissertation Methodologies

The Need for Methodological Pluralism in Investigations of Disciplinary Discourse

I have tried to make clear that the nature of not only the professional rhetoric of literary scholars but also the rhetorical practices encouraged in undergraduate literature courses are very much unclear. By synthesizing methodological approaches that are typically kept distinct, this dissertation seeks to offer a fuller, more multifaceted understanding of literary studies as a disciplinary discourse community than we have had before. Specifically, my dissertation builds on the work of those few rhetoricians who have examined literary criticism as the discourse of a disciplinary community,

[7] In fact, C.N. Manlove declares *Critical Thinking: A Guide to Interpreting Literary Texts* was "written out of a distrust for the professional criticism of literature" (p. 12).

particularly Fahnestock and Secor, in uncovering the values assumed in the professional rhetoric of literary studies. In the tradition of rhetorical analyses of key scientific publications, I analyze a charter publication in the formation of literary studies as a discipline in the U.S. In a further attempt to chart how this academic discourse community defines, maintains, and transforms itself, I also rhetorically analyze a recent sample of this discipline's discourse. My project also builds on the work of those such as Geisler, Herrington, and Walvoord and McCarthy who have examined classroom discourse as discourse at the boundaries of disciplinary communities. I investigate the previously unexamined role of professional values in a site that is simultaneously central to this discipline's work and low in its hierarchical structure: the frequently required undergraduate introductory literature course. In practice, the literature course intended for non-majors may be a borderland of discourse communities and a site of value formation and conflict, but it has yet to be studied as such. The boundaries of disciplinary discourse communities may be more complex and permeable than current descriptions of them relate.

Drawing my methodologies from previous scholarship not only allows for replication which can corroborate or extend previous scholarship, it also makes possible some tentative comparisons of the activities of a disciplinary discourse community over time. More significantly, with my methodological pluralism I seek to compensate for some of the oversights and exaggerations any one approach might produce. Those who have theorized about discourse communities (Beaufort, 1997 Bizzell, 1992; Geisler, 1994; Swales, 1990) have attested that what we mean by the term "discourse

community" may include a complex web of shared (often partially or temporarily) social, cognitive, and affective factors. Thus I argue we need to employ an equally complex web of methodological approaches in our observations of discourse communities to not only lend more credence to our conclusions but to attempt to determine if our methods have not created the phenomena we wish to observe. My project of course falls short of this ideal, but I hope its attempt to provide a necessarily blurred snapshot of a community in conversation can help us interrogate the effect of the past on present discursive practice, the extent to which professional tasks such as research and teaching are distinctly compartmentalized or integrated, and the extent to which participation at the peripheral of the community is legitimate. My historical analysis of the development of the rhetorical conventions of professional literary study and textual analysis of this discipline's recent publications draws primarily from the methodologies employed by Fahnestock and Secor. My empirical analysis of classroom discourse draws from the methodologies of studies of student discourse as "liminal" discourse. However, for all the apparent differences in methodology of the studies presented here, my perception while conducting them was that in each I read texts—whether published articles, student papers, or transcriptions of spoken discourse—through the lens of rhetoric.

The Methodology of "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism"

Fahnestock and Secor's application of Classical rhetoric to literary criticism draws on categories first discussed by Classical rhetoricians to examine the "informal logic" and audience appeals frequently implicit in professional discourse due to the

specialized nature of its community or readers. Specifically Fahnestock and Secor sought to categorize the rhetorical genre (deliberative, forensic, or epideictic), stases (existence, definitional, evaluative, causal, or proposal), and special *topoi* or warrants of disciplinary discourse. Classical rhetoricians primarily stressed the usefulness of these concepts as inventional tools, but as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca and Fahnestock and Secor have argued and demonstrated, they can be insightfully used "in reverse" as tools of audience analysis. The work of the rhetorician in this instance is to attempt to analyze after-the-fact the attitudes, values, and predispositions of an audience a rhetor attempted to entreat, deliberately or not, in his or her discourse. As tools of analysis they seem particularly suited to address the questions I have raised because they can seek to characterize assumptions shared between rhetor and audience that may transcend the object of any particular discourse. In other words, these tools seem particularly well suited for an analysis of a disciplinary discourse community whose object of study has so noticeably changed over time.

The stases, as a tool of rhetorical analysis in analyses such as Fahnestock and Secor's, characterize the question or questions an argument seeks to resolve, in other words, the issues the rhetor sees as controversial to his or her audience. Drawing from the largely forensic treatment of the stases intended to help educate young rhetors and lawyers in the surviving evidence of Hermagoras's lost manuscript, Hermogenes' *On*

Stases, Cicero's *De Inventione*, and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (Nadeau, 1964),[8] contemporary rhetoricians tend to agree on the classification of five hierarchically addressed stasis issues: existence or conjecture, definition, evaluation, cause, and proposal (Fahnestock & Secor, 1988). As Fahnestock and Secor (1988) point out, the discourse of academic disciplines, unlike public discourse such as news media reports, tends not to address the full range of stasis issues in a given publication. What can reveal the rhetorical function of disciplinary discourse, then, are investigations of why particular audiences are addressed at particular stases.

Fahnestock and Secor found existence and definitional propositions most frequently in their sample, and they note that a few made overt evaluative claims. However, they saw implicit pushes towards the evaluative and proposal stases in every argument. Thus they read an article arguing the genre categorization of a literary work as implicitly arguing to more firmly establish that work's place in the literary canon and on syllabi. As such, they saw literary criticism functioning as epideictic, celebrating and facilitating the perpetuation of the discipline's own work and values.

Topoi, according to Aristotle, are a source for warrants, the often unstated premises of enthymemes, commonly understood as rhetorical syllogisms (Slomkowski, 1997, p. 45). Metaphorically, they are both an inventional "place" for storing these

[8] Nadeau (1964) explains that, though Hermagoras is frequently credited as its author, rhetorical stasis theory appears inchoately in the work of the Stoics and Aristotle's *Topics* and *Rhetoric* and the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. The writers of subsequent rhetorical handbooks regularly repeated the theory while somewhat modifying and rearranging stases. Though the handbooks primarily focused on and illustrated the forensic use of the stases, many at least suggested their usefulness in deliberative and even epideictic rhetoric.

starting points for arguments (perhaps related to the mnemonic practice of associating memorized material with imagined physical locations) and points of entry when attacking an opponent's argument (Aristotle, 1997, p. xxviii). According to Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary, Aristotle's student Theophrastus labeled an unpredicated topic as "*parangelma*" and used the term "*topoi*" to describe warrants that are derived from *parangelma* (Slomkowski, 1997, p. 62). Later scholars reviving Classical rhetoric such as Fahnestock and Secor and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) have adopted this meaning of the term, defining *topoi* (or *loci*) as commonly held warrants or often unstated premises which seek to connect with an audience's hierarchy of values. Special *topoi* are thus commonplaces of a particular rhetorical situation, warrants not necessarily shared by the larger society in which a particular discourse community operates. They are "agreements that are peculiar to the members of a particular discipline," and "they characterize certain audiences" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 99). Toulmin (1964) developed more fully the concept of warrants and their supporting backing. His textbook, *An Introduction to Reasoning* (1979), presents the use of particular warrants as connected to particular disciplines and fields such as "science and engineering," "law and ethics," "medicine," and "aesthetics and psychology," explaining that the backing for such particular warrants is something apprentices learn as they enter a profession (1979, p. 63).

Fahnestock and Secor identified five special *topoi* of literary criticism. They observed that "special literary *topoi* invoke the shared assumptions of the community of

literary scholars, and at the same time create that community" (1991, p. 84). Distilling Fahnestock and Secor's characterizations, the five special *topoi* of literary criticism are:

- **Appearance/reality.** The critic points out a perception of two entities: one more immediate, the other latent; one on the surface, the other deep; one obvious, the other the object of search.
- **Ubiquity.** The critic points out a form (a device, an image, a linguistic feature, a pattern) repeated throughout a work. Either many examples of the same thing are pointed out, or one thing is noted in many forms, up and down a scale of grandeur and abstraction.
- **Paradox.** The critic points out the unification of apparently irreconcilable opposites in a single startling dualism.
- ***Contemptus mundi.*** The critic exhibits an assumption of despair over the condition of society. The critic tends to value works that describe despair, alienation, seediness, anxiety, decay, declining values, and difficulty of living and loving in our society. Similarly, the critic attempts to point out the unresolvable tensions and shadows in literature that at face value seem optimistic.
- **Paradigm.** The critic fits a kind of template over the details of a literary text to endow them with order, elucidate a structure. A microparadigm *topos* describes a small structural unit in the text that becomes the center of ever-larger concentric applications, moving ultimately beyond the text under discussion, while a macroparadigm *topos* imports relationships from the

> world outside the literary text within the particular work. Often the critic juxtaposes two diverse works to elucidate some aspect of a text, or the critic may note a large social reality writ small in the individual text.

Fahnestock and Secor observed that these special *topoi* were tools the literary critics used upon texts as well as the warrants that the critics as a professional discourse community shared. Consistently the use of these special *topoi* assumed values of complexity and non-reductive argumentation held by both the arguer and the audience.

Because Fahnestock and Secor claim that to use the preferred stases and special *topoi* of literary criticism appropriately is "to announce one's membership in the community of literary scholars" (p. 91), their descriptions of these conventions provide signposts to look for in earlier and later professional discourse that may start to help us trace the movement of rhetorical conventions over time in this disciplinary discourse community. Their descriptions also provide signals that may announce a student's acquisition of key conventions of English studies. Their descriptions provide a starting point, an inductive lens, and that is how I use them in the following studies.

The Methodologies of Liminal Discourse Studies

Geisler (1994) points out that "ultimately the two analytic perspectives on expert-novice differences, one cognitive, the other social, cannot easily be untangled" (p. 209). This is because we acquire knowledge and attitudes, or "sociological indoctrination," at the same time that we "acquire knowledge and skills--a cognitive development" (p. 209). Thus studies of student discourse as "liminal discourse" typically triangulate a variety of methodologies and collect a variety of types of data in

order to unravel some of the complexity of the web of sociocognitive skills and practices students bring to and learn in their introduction to a discipline. Studies such as Geisler's (1994), Walvoord and McCarthy's (1990), and Herrington's (1985; 1992) often examine students' discourse practices in situ, observing their reading and writing practices in their normal environments as well as their spoken discourse in their classrooms. Of course these studies also analyze students' texts, the products of these practices, but one feature which distinguishes "liminal discourse" studies from other studies of student discourse is their reliance on established "insiders" of the discourse community to evaluate the rhetorical success of students' writing. In this same vein, these studies typically also include interviews with students and professors so as not to rely solely on the researchers' usually "outsider" interpretations. Lastly, these studies sometimes involve an intervention into the regular proceedings of coursework in order to clarify some aspect of the nature of this liminal discourse. For instance, Geisler (1994) asked students to synthesize a selection of sources in a composition task that sought to extend and test the limits of undergraduates' abilities to navigate a disciplinary "conversation." I employ these elements (in situ observation, "insider" rankings of rhetorical success of texts, interviews, and intervention) in the two studies of an undergraduate literature course that comprise the second half of my dissertation.

Plan of Dissertation Chapters

My dissertation begins with needed rhetorical analyses of discourse published by and circulated among literary scholars. As we have seen, many literary scholars

have investigated the influences that motivated the professionalization of literary study and debated the efficacy and virtue of professionalization, but investigations into the rhetorical practices of literary scholars as professionals are sorely lacking. Many of the historical studies of the rhetoric of science focusing on subsequently highly influential publications, such as those by James Watson and Francis Crick or Isaac Newton, have revealed that their rhetorical elements were integral to their influence. Did the early professionals of literary study adopt similar rhetorical conventions in their first journals? And have these conventions had staying power in the field? In Chapter 1, "Into the Laboratories of the University": A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Publication of the Modern Language Association, I seek to begin addressing these questions with an analysis of the first publication of what has become the central, governing organization of literary studies in the U.S. My analysis of more recent discourse in Chapter 2, "Never Obvious or Simple": "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism" Revisited, assesses the changes in the discipline's assumptions and values since Bazerman, Fahnestock and Secor, and MacDonald conducted their analyses over two decades ago. My analyses of professional discourse apply, with some modification, the methodologies Fahnestock and Secor and MacDonald have used in analyses of literary studies and scientific discourse communities. Specifically, I trace the stasis and special *topoi* conventions in a broad sample of the profession's journal publications.

Just as rhetorical analyses of historical and contemporary professional discourse in this field are needed, so too are analyses of discourse in the sites where literary scholars, as Watkins (1989) points out, spend a good deal of their working hours--

classrooms. For the study presented in Chapter 3, "Get Comfortable with Uncertainty": A Study of the Conventional Values of Literary Analysis in an Undergraduate Literature Course, I triangulate ethnographic observations of a large undergraduate literature class's meetings, textual analyses of a sample of students' essays, and questionnaires to explore the extent to which the special *topoi* of professional-level discourse are present in a class intended for non-majors. As we have seen, many professors, including the one whose course I observed for this study, state that their intention is not to introduce disciplinary discourse conventions in such introductory courses. However, as work in the rhetoric of science has demonstrated, practitioners often do not explicitly acknowledge, and may likely be unaware of, the rhetorical nature of their discourse, especially those assumptions they share with fellow practitioners and from which they can warrant claims in their professional discourse.

Following on this observation that some literary scholars may emphasize implicitly the special *topoi* of their discipline and explicitly other values to students, Chapter 4, "Give a Formal Name to Something I Already Knew": Distinguishing Discipline-Specific and Generally Held Discourse Values in an Undergraduate Literature Course, presents a study that seeks to distinguish the weight given to the use of discipline-specific rhetorical strategies and more general stylistic strategies in evaluating undergraduate writing through an interventional quasi-experiment. Additionally, this study investigates the potential effectiveness of explicit instruction in discourse features that have been traditionally transmitted tacitly, a controversial matter among educational psychologists and compositionists. (Theories of "situated learning"

tend to favor tacit absorption over the teaching of abstractions.) For this study, students in a large introductory literature class for non-majors participated in two workshops before assigned course papers were due. One workshop focused on the special *topoi* of literary criticism, which value complex, non-reductive interpretations; the second focused on strategies for improving written coherence. Through these interventions that seek to highlight and emphasize what are typically buried or of secondary concern in the discourse of the literature classroom, this study attempts to clarify our understandings of the "boundaries" of academic discourse communities and of the situated nature of "good" writing.

I conclude the dissertation by advocating for future directions research on the rhetoric of literary studies and other disciplines should take. In particular, I think the triangulation of methodologies employed in my project has the potential to yield results that will contribute to our understanding of the complex, social processes that produce scholarly discourse while also advancing research that can be used to help students as they enter those processes. I also advocate for pedagogies that more consciously treat undergraduate courses as introductions to disciplinary discourse communities. The attention to rhetorical concerns of audience and purpose such an approach emphasizes, I argue, should foster the development of skills useful to students in contexts outside of their introduction to literature course.

I. Professional Discourse

CHAPTER ONE:

"Into the Laboratories of the University": A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Publication of the Modern Language Association

In his President's Address delivered at the twentieth annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, 1902, James Wilson Bright addressed the assembled "Concerning the Unwritten History of the Modern Language Association of America." Bright's recollection for his audience of the early meetings of the MLA included a depiction of three competing camps of interests struggling to identify the Association's purpose and goals. According to Bright's account, one camp of "misconstructionists" consisted of "the foreign fencing-master and dancing-master with the superadded 'arts" of the 'tongues'--the 'tongues as accomplishments to be classed with fencing and dancing,--the curling tongs… to 'mend,' to curl our locks" (p. xlvii). "It is gratifying to know," Bright told his audience presumably now devoid of members of this peculiar camp, "that this Association did not yield to the allurements of becoming a Gild of Barbers" (p. xlvii).[1] Another group of "participants in those early, tentative deliberations were concerned in founding or in finding here a Teachers' Agency" (p. xlvii). Interestingly, Bright seems equally relieved to not be addressing an Association with such members in 1902: "the Association, we rejoice to say, has not yet become a Teachers' Agency" (p. xlvii). Such a role "was felt to be essentially incompatible with that of the scholar, and this conviction, in view of the cherished purpose of the organization, was happily sufficient to assure their gentle but unflinching suppression" (p. xlviii). The third party in the initial struggles is the one which by 1902 was the ruling party of the Association, the one which Bright looks back upon to cheer along: "it was natural that observers of a certain temperament should see in this Association an

[1] Though Bright's curious description of this group makes it difficult to identify with certainty just who were its members, he leads me to believe they were teachers of modern languages other than English who aimed to develop their pupils' conversational ability in foreign languages. Bright may also have intended for this group to include elocutionists who likewise aimed to develop their pupils' speaking abilities, which, like fencing and dancing, are a marker of social class.

adjunct to the Scientific School, to the Polytechnic Institute. That was a substantial gain. It was real progress to pass from the girls' finishing school into the laboratories of the University" (p. xlviii).

Bright's address shows us that the historical tracing of professional turf wars and controversies is not the novel enterprise of late twentieth-century works such as Richard Ohmann's *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* and Gerald Graff's *Professing Literature: An Institutional History*. Ohmann and Graff, too, look back to the early publications and meetings of the MLA to locate the origins of current controversies in the field of English literature studies in America. The prominent position of the MLA in the discipline today frequently leads literary scholars interested in tracing the origins of literary study in America to its founding. Linda Hutcheon (2000), then president of the MLA, stated this view in a commemorative issue of *PMLA*, "the history of the MLA is in some ways the history of the profession in North America" (p. 1719).

Ohmann upholds the early contributors to the first publication of the Modern Language Association, volume I of *Transactions of the Modern Language Association of America 1884-5* (later to become *PMLA* after volume IV) as exemplars of faculty balancing scholarship, pedagogy, and civic duty. He cites the titles of four of their articles which indicate they addressed issues of instruction and textbook selection to demonstrate that "the MLA addressed itself to literary history and contemporary culture in about equal measure" and that "a young man or woman, aspiring to a literary career, might look for advancement though teaching and cultural criticism, along with historical scholarship" (1996, p. 34). Ohmann contrasts this noble balance with what he

sees as an imbalance in the later MLA. "But by 1968," Ohmann writes, "the symbolic and actual primacy of scholarship was indeed clear" (p. 34). The Association, as he saw it, turned away from its early commitments to teaching and the public sphere under the governance by scholars from elite, research institutions who had garnered the most and most prestigious publications. The exclusion of members lower in the organization's hierarchy from the MLA's governance and the short shrift of teaching deeply troubled Ohmann in 1968. In his account, the story of the MLA, and thus of the profession of English, is of a fall away from an ideal balance of scholarship, teaching, and cultural criticism.

Graff, however, is more careful to point out that there were no women among the first MLA members, and he is also less quick to identify his understanding of ideal literary study with their intentions. Instead, the intentions of the early members of the MLA are more puzzling to him than exemplary. He states that "it now seems odd" that these early members "could have confused literary and linguistic study so badly" (1987, p. 68). In their introduction to *The Origins of Literary Studies in America: A Documentary Anthology*, a collection which includes six articles from early publications of the Modern Language Association, Graff and Michael Warner articulate a late twentieth-century response to the scholarship of the founding members of the MLA: "one looks in vain… for anything resembling the kind of textual explication that would later occupy the center of literary study" (Graff & Warner, 1989, p. 8). This is because, as Graff demonstrates, the early members of the MLA were philologists who viewed themselves as forming a professional organization devoted to advancing and facilitating

their research. Their study of modern languages, according to the 1913 *Cyclopedia of Education*, attempted to organize a system "as clearly defined as are modern botany, biology, and astronomy" (p. 682). Graff's narrative then is, in distinct contrast to Ohmann's, a story of the discipline's progression away from what in hindsight is the "dismal failure" (p. 68) of the early MLA members.

Bright, Ohmann, and Graff's historical narratives remind us that interpretation of past events is colored by our rhetorical purposes of the moment. But more than this, these narratives underscore a lack of consensus on the rhetorical function of the professional discourse that these early MLA members published.

Recent scholarship in the rhetoric of academic disciplines has provided us with a fuller understanding of many of the rhetorical functions of much more current discourse produced by members of this discipline. Charles Bazerman (1981) contrasted some assumptions underpinning an article of literary criticism published in 1978 with a molecular biology article and a sociology article, finding the literary criticism to be more particularistic, idiosyncratic, and personal. Drawing from a larger sample of scholarly articles, Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor (1988; 1991; Secor, 1984) categorized the most frequent rhetorical forum of literary criticism (epideictic), the most frequent stasis issues that literary criticism addresses (existence, definition, and evaluation), and several common and special *topoi* that typically bespeak these arguments' underlying assumptions. Susan Peck MacDonald (1987, 1989, 1992, 1994) analyzed how scholarly discourse by Renaissance New Historicist scholars defines its problems and uses sentence subjects, finding this discourse to be less likely to highlight

research methods and warrants than the written discourse of scholars in the fields of psychology and history. And Michael Carter's (1992) fuller characterization of literary criticism as private epideictic sought to explain the virulent attacks literary scholarship faces periodically in the popular media. Yet despite Bazerman's observation that "current writing practices (in conventional, interactional, and epistemological dimensions) build on a history of practice and speak to a historically conditioned situation" (1988, pp. 4-5), no investigations into the development of these practices in literary studies have been conducted. Graff and Warner explain the exigency behind their anthology by asserting that "documents from the founding period of any enterprise are a peculiarly revealing source of information about that enterprise's original purposes and motives" (p. 2). Likewise, Bazerman claims that "by examining the emergence of a genre we can identify the kinds of problems the genre was attempting to solve and how it went about solving them" (p. 63). The methodologies used in rhetorical analyses of recent literary criticism should help clarify the rhetorical purposes of the documents published by the first members of the MLA.

Also, though I gather that some of the philologists who contributed to the first publication of the MLA might even object to this use of the term "literary," such an analysis taken with the work of Bazerman, Fahnestock, Secor, MacDonald, and Carter may help us better understand the "institutional norms of the 'literary'" that "are at any given time arguable, and always historically variable" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 203). How aware of the specialized nature of their audience were the contributors to this first publication of the MLA? What issues did the early MLA members address in this

forum? On what issues did this discourse community agree and disagree? What rhetorical strategies and stances did they employ? The answers to questions such as these may allow us to better understand the "historical variability" of institutional norms, perhaps one of the sources of confusion a novice in a field faces.

In this chapter I seek to better understand the rhetorical functions of the discourse published in this periodical by the founding members of the MLA. Not only should this analysis assist in clarifying the confusing image of the early MLA produced when contrasting Bright, Ohmann, and Graff's narratives, it should also contribute to the burgeoning investigations of disciplinarity and the development of its apparatuses (Foucault, 1972, 1979; Messer-Davidow, Shumway, & Sylvan, 1993; Shumway & Messer-Davidow, 1991). The MLA formed at a moment in the late nineteenth century when so many other academic disciplines and professions were organizing, forming their hierarchies and establishing increasingly narrow while increasingly elaborate areas of expertise. An analysis of the professionalization of modern language study, a subject prior to this moment largely considered unwarranted beyond the literacy skills acquired in grammar-school and the rhetorical skills practiced in extracurricular oratorical societies, could reveal a good deal about the amassing of and acquiescence to the powerful authority of professional specializations at this time. Lastly, this analysis has the potential to extend and further substantiate the rhetorical analyses by Fahnestock and Secor and MacDonald by applying the methodologies they used to investigate the rhetoric of literary criticism to a much earlier sample published in the same forum. Thus this analysis should contribute to our understanding of the "evolving discussion,

with its own goals, issues, terms, arguments, and dialect" (Bazerman, 1988, p. 5) of contemporary professional literary study.

In "The MLA 1883-1953," William Riley Parker recreates, through the published proceedings and newspaper accounts, the first meetings of the Association in which "a journal was the first idea to be suggested" (1953, p. 18). "There was a considerable difference of opinion," Parker tells us, "as to the character to be given such a publication" (p. 18). Some members, according to Parker, favored a publication for a professional audience containing philological articles, reviews, and pedagogical discussions. Others argued, because such a publication would likely be a financial failure, the journal should reach a popular audience and contain pictures and biographies of great philologists. So what matters did the first publication of this professional organization address and to what audience? It is time to turn to the 1884-5 *Transactions* for answers. Table 1.1 presents the contents of the 250-page volume. These titles suggest that the views of those members who envisioned a publication containing philological studies, pedagogical discussions, and reviews were represented in the first volume. Based on the titles alone, we can see that one review appears (XI), and one discussion of an author's correspondence (I); the bulk of the articles appears to be philological inquiries (III, V, VII, X, XIV, XVI) and pedagogical discussions concerning the teaching of modern languages (II, IV, VI, VIII, IX, XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XVIII). Thus, those arguing for appealing to a professional audience appear to have won the debate. The 1913 *Cyclopedia of Education* tells us that a "fundamental difficulty which obstructs the path of the philologist… is the vast extent of inherently

heterogeneous subject matter which he must command and assimilate. The specialist is necessary for the preparation of the material, but the specialist is manifestly incapable of spreading himself over the whole field" (p. 683). It appears that the early MLA envisioned a periodical publication that could fill this need for the sharing of the results of their specialized studies.

TABLE 1.1: Contents of *Transactions of the Modern Language Association of America, 1884-5.*

I.	Richter's Correspondence with a Lady, Some unpublished Letters, By President Franklin Carter.
II.	The Aims and Methods of Collegiate Instruction in Modern Languages By Professor W. T. Hewett
III.	The Factive in German By Professor Sylvester Primer
IV.	How far should our Teaching and Text-books have a Scientific Basis? By Professor H.C.G. Brandt
V.	On the Genitive in Old French By Professor Hans C.G. Von Jagemann
VI.	The College Course in English Literature, how it may be Improved By Professor James Morgan Hart
VII.	The French Language in Louisiana and the Negro-French Dialect By Professor Alcée Fortier
VIII.	A Modern Classical Course By Professor F.V.N. Painter
IX.	The Place of English in the College Curriculum By Professor Th. W. Hunt
X.	The Collective Singular in Spanish By Professor Henry R. Lang
XI.	A Review of Edmund Gosse's "From Shakespeare to Pope" By President Henry E. Shepherd
XII.	German Classics as a Means of Education By Dr. Julius Goebel
XIII.	What Place has Old English Philology in our Elementary Schools? By Dr. Francis B. Gummere
XIV.	Adjectival and Adverbial Relations; their Influence upon the Government of the Verb By Professor Sylvester Primer
XV.	The Requirements in English for Admission to College By Professor John G.R. McElroy
XVI.	Remarks on the Conjugation of the Wallonian Dialect By Professor J. James Stürzinger
XVII.	On the Use of English in Teaching Foreign Languages By Professor Hans C.G. Von Jagemann
XVIII.	The Realgymnasium Question By Professor A. Marshall Elliott

Analysis of Stases

As this is the first publication of an organization struggling to define its field, and even more because that field has since transformed into something quite different, I do not wish to make assumptions based solely on current conventions of title usage concerning the content of these articles. Fahnestock and Secor (1988; 1991) have used

stasis theory to analyze arguments published in the May 9, 1986 issue of *Science* and the January 1986 issue of *PMLA* as well as a further selection of literary criticism published in journals between 1978 and 1982. The hierarchical stases, as they define them, from questions of existence, questions of definition, questions of cause, questions of value, to questions of policy,

> represent a full set of possibilities from which an author, in a particular rhetorical situation, under a particular exigence, addressing a particular audience, selects. The author may stay in just one or two of the stases because that is where he or she can meet the intended audience, because that is where the audience's needs and interests lie, or because that is where they can be reached, no matter where the writer wants to take them. In other words, the stases are not only an invention device and a principle of arrangement; they can also become a sensitive tool of audience analysis. (1988, p. 431)

To investigate questions concerning the issues at stake in the first publication of the MLA as well as the contributors' awareness and attention to audience, an analysis of the stases addressed in the articles may prove helpful. Table 1.2 provides an overview of the stasis issues addressed in each article. No one article addresses all five stases, although all appear in the volume. Though several articles address more than one stasis, many of these place greater emphasis on one stasis over the others.

This analysis of stases supports my earlier observation that roughly half of the publication addresses procedural concerns of pedagogy while another group of articles attempts to locate, define, and often trace the etymological roots of linguistic features. However, there are interesting overlaps; for instance, in "XII. German Classics as a Means of Education," Goebel sets his task as first to demonstrate the existence of "ethical and aesthetic elements of education such as [Goethe] ascribed to ancient authors" (p. 158) in Goethe's own poetry, along the way defining "ethical" and

TABLE 1.2: Stasis Issues Addressed By Each Article in *Transactions of the Modern Language Association of America 1884-5*. An ● indicates a significant, primary focus of the argument while a * indicates a minor, passing, or secondary point of the argument.

Title of Article	Stasis: Existence	Definition	Evaluation	Cause	Proposal
I. Richter's Correspondence with a Lady, Some unpublished Letters	*		●		
II. The Aims and Methods of Collegiate Instruction in Modern Languages					●
III. The Factive in German	*	*		●	
IV. How far should our Teaching and Text-books have a Scientific Basis?					
V. On the Genitive in Old French	*	●	*	*	
VI. The College Course in English Literature, how it may be Improved			●		●
VII. The French Language in Louisiana and the Negro-French Dialect	●	●		*	*
VIII. A Modern Classical Course					●
IX. The Place of English in the College Curriculum		*		●	●
X. The Collective Singular in Spanish	●				
XI. A Review of Edmund Gosse's "From Shakespeare to Pope"	*		●		
XII. German Classics as a Means of Education	*	●			*
XIII. What Place has Old English Philology in our Elementary Schools			●		●
XIV. Adjectival and Adverbial Relations; their Influence upon the Government of the Verb		●			
XV. The Requirements in English for Admission to College			●	*	●
XVI. Remarks on the Conjugation of the Wallonian Dialect	*	●		*	
XVII. On the Use of English in Teaching Foreign Languages			●		●
XVIII. The Realgymnasium Question	*		●	*	●

"aesthetic," so that he can argue the study of German literature can and should (proposal) supplant the study of classical literature.

Many of the philological analyses begin in the first stasis, claiming or demonstrating the existence of the linguistic feature under investigation. Lang's "X. The Collective Singular in Spanish" never moves beyond this stasis, for as he states, "It is the purpose of this paper to call attention to the existence of this construction in the Romance languages and particularly in Spanish" (p. 134). The next common step is to define the linguistic feature, to set up parameters for its meaning; Primer does this as he works to answer his question: "What, then, is the real nature of the adjectival and adverbial idea, and where shall we draw the boundary line between the two?" ("XIV. Adjectival," p. 180). Many of the philological investigations next inquire into the origins of linguistic features, invoking the stasis of cause: "A careful consideration of a few of the salient points just brought out in the foregoing discussion of the origin and later development of the infinitive will aid us to determine the origin, nature, and original function of our factive, which the infinitive often expresses" ("III. The Factive," p. 55).

Definitional issues are also not uncommon in the pedagogical treatises; in "IX. The Place of English in the College Curriculum," Hunt begins with an important and recognizably controversial definition for his audience: "We mean by English,--the English Language and Literature as including, also, the subject of English style and criticism" (p. 118). Likewise, several of the pedagogical treatises address the sources, or causes, of neglect of philology in contemporary teaching practices: "It is in point to

allude to one or two causes of this neglect: as seen in Defective Teaching and Want of Appreciation" (IX. Hunt, p. 119) and "Now, there can be no doubt that one source of weakness in the English course is the indifference of so many of our college-faculties….but *the* weak spot in the teaching of English is outside of college, is the sadly unsatisfactory preparation with which so many candidates come for admission" (XV. McElroy, p. 195-6). However, though only one of the purely philological investigations ventures into the next stasis, the stasis addressing value, many of the pedagogical treatises evaluate contemporary pedagogical practices and texts. For instance, Gummere first addresses the question "what are the faults of our present common-school system?" (XIII. p. 170) before arguing for philology's place in schools. Hart objects to those of his contemporaries who "persist" in equating instruction in English with instruction in rhetoric, which he rates as "little more than verbal jugglery" that "savors… of the school-bench" (VI. p. 85). Hart's evaluation of anthologies used by students is equally biting: "Mr. Morley's *English Plays* is not only an unwieldy and expensive book, but it is wretchedly planned and swarms with errors of every kind, yet it is the only book that attempts to cover the ground. The selections made by Charles Lamb, fifty years ago, are palpably inadequate" (p. 89). In this light, Shepherd's "XI. A Review of Edmund Gosse's 'From Shakespeare To Pope'" is not an endeavor apart from the pedagogical treatises appearing in the volume. His critique asks what benefits and deficiencies Gosse's work presents a student of English literature: "Despite its many agreeable features, it lacks both the depth and breadth of philosophic or scientific

investigation, and the critical student of our literary evolution, will lay it aside, with a mingled feeling of disappointment and regret" (p. 149).

Clearly all the articles in the volume with titles characterizing them as pedagogical treatises raise proposal stasis concerns. They all propose a place for philology in various curriculums, though it is interesting that there is by no means agreement on the nature of that place. The most against-the-grain argument appears to be Hewett's in which he states that, when pushed to an extreme, philology "induces a cold, critical treatment of the most glowing passages in literature, stifles enthusiasm and stands in the way of true literary culture. Philological comments and illustrations should be subordinate to the interpretation of the thoughts of the authors and the truths he presents" (II. p. 34). The others call for readjustments to the classical curriculum to include modern languages, teachers trained in philology, and textbooks that focus on philological concerns. However, though often not explicitly, the articles characterized as philological investigations may also suggest proposal issues. As Fahnestock and Secor explain, "arguments conducted in one stasis nudge audiences to either construct or assume arguments in other stases" (1988, p. 431). Such a nudge is made explicit in two of these philological investigations. Von Jagemann briefly introduces "V. On the Genitive in Old French" with the suggestion that "if a student is already well grounded in the fundamental rules of Latin syntax, constant reference to the same must be regarded as a valuable help in teaching Modern French, particularly if the additional element of the Old French can be drawn upon for comparison" (p. 64). Similarly, Fortier prefaces his investigation of "VII. The French Language in Louisiana and the

Negro-French Dialect" with the following plea: "We wish, above all, to encourage the study of the French language, but also to raise the level of education in Louisiana and to induce our people to take advantage of their natural intelligence to become a literary community" (p. 101). Investigating linguistic features through stases of fact, definition, and cause, the philological articles placed beside the pedagogical treatises imply the stasis of proposal; they suggest that the results of their investigations should be subject matter for the new students of philology.

Fahnestock and Secor (1988) found just such an unstated push towards the proposal stasis in the articles appearing in 1986 issues of *Science* and *PMLA*. Interestingly, they found both the *Science* and *PMLA* articles focus on the lower stases of fact, definition, and cause with only the *PMLA* articles raising (often only implicitly) issues of evaluation. Though none of the scientific and literary articles examined explicitly make procedural suggestions, "one can easily predict that the science articles will lead to specific proposals and altered actions (though perhaps not by the scientists who wrote the articles)" (p. 441), and the reinforcement or critique of canonical works in the literary articles "does eventually affect the classroom and the publication policies of journals such as *PMLA*; critical approaches are either acceptable or not, and, on a more practical level, careers are made (or unmade) by publication" (p. 438).

Beyond this similarity, worth noting when comparing the 1986 scientific and literary arguments to the first publication of the MLA, is the prevalence of the explicit evaluative and proposal stases in the 1884-5 *Transactions*. Though the purely philological investigations subscribe to the stasis conventions of both later scientific and

literary disciplinary discourse by assuming with their audience the value of their subjects, the pedagogical treatises of the first publication of this new professional organization work to both define and establish the field through openly deliberative discourse. When Gummere bemoans the lack of a systematic review of textbooks, he declares, "Here is something for this convention to undertake" (XIII. p. 177). Likewise, at the conclusion of his demonstration of the benefits of including English philology in curriculums, Hunt makes a plea for deliberation: "we commend its [English's] temperate claims to the intelligent judgment and practical support of all those among us who have to do with educational reform" (IX. p. 132). Painter's conclusion is in a similar vein, though here the verdict is out of the Association's hands: "In view of the foregoing considerations, I think we may confidently appeal at least to the public in behalf of a modern classical course" (VIII. p. 117).

Analysis of *Topoi*

These pleas in the pedagogical treatises together with the assumptions of the philological treatises clearly indicate the *Transactions* contributors' awareness of a specialized, professional audience. What the articles leave unstated in this context would need to be first established if addressing a broader or oppositional (say, Greek and Latin professors) audience, namely the purpose and benefits of investigations into modern language linguistic features. We see an awareness of the context that allows this unstated warrant in Brandt's call for a scientific basis to instruction:

> It may seem to some of you that I am re-asserting what nobody denies, and want to defend what nobody attacks. But let us not be deceived….In fact, were our Association not as limited as it is—for very good reasons, to be sure—and were our papers intended to be brought before the general public, I am not sure but it would be worth our while to state the reasons, why our department is a science. But among us this will hardly be necessary. (IV. pp. 57-8)

A member of the Association need not address the Association on certain controversies as the first members of the MLA chartered for themselves areas of common ground. As Von Jagemann states, "It is not necessary for me to go into a discussion of the ends of modern language study, as I stand, substantially, on the ground marked out by this Association in its declaration that 'literary culture, philological scholarship and linguistic discipline are the primary aims of collegiate instruction in modern languages'" (XVII. p. 216).

The enthymatic warrant that philology is a worthwhile endeavor invoked as these examples illustrate can be understood as a special *topos*, a commonplace of this particular rhetorical situation. Another special *topos* of the first publication of the MLA could be described as the "new field" *topos*. It is not uncommon for an article to conclude on a note such as Fortier's: "I offer this paper as a very imperfect sketch of the Negro-French dialect, but claim some indulgence as the work treats of a field new and almost entirely unexplored" (VII. p. 111). Hart asks his audience to "observe that I am indicating lines of research, rather than stating results" (VI. p. 94) precisely because the

first Association members recognized that the field of philology, particularly in America, was just beginning its research. Fahnestock and Secor (1991) identify five special *topoi* common to a group of articles of literary criticism published between 1978 and 1982, some in *PMLA*, and note that "special literary *topoi* invoke the shared assumptions of the community of literary scholars, and at the same time create that community" (p. 84). To use them appropriately is "to announce one's membership in the community of literary scholars" (93). Though identifying two special *topoi*, the "new field" *topos* and the "worthwhile" *topos*, is perhaps just a start, these special *topoi* do appear to function in the first publication of the MLA in much the same way as the five special *topoi* Fahnestock and Secor classified. They create a community in agreement on otherwise arguable topics so that the community, free to move beyond fundamental arguments about the worthwhile nature of its field, can pursue the research it needs to establish itself as a viable field.

As Fahnestock and Secor have identified five of the special *topoi* common to the community of literary scholars of 1978 to 1982, can any of these five be identified in the first publication of the MLA, arguably the founders of this community of scholars? Of Fahnestock and Secor's five (the "appearance/reality," ubiquity, paradox, *contemptus mundi*, and paradigm *topoi*), the "appearance/reality" and the ubiquity *topoi* are apparent in several of the articles in *Transactions*. Arguments claiming reality may not be as it appears occasionally surface as in Primer's "III. The Factive in German": "Inasmuch as the infinitive in *tum* does not everywhere express the accusative relation, but others lying far from it, its real accusative form was not recognized, and its true

nature and relation long misunderstood" (p. 51). However, it is clear that this *topos*, though a familiar formulation, is applied quite differently than in later literary criticism; the location of reality and an appearance departing from it is entirely in the scholarly, philological discourse, not in a literary, textual world. The ubiquity *topos*, however, is employed more often and is used in a manner closer to its later appearance in literary criticism. The philologists invoke the ubiquity *topos* to demonstrate that a previously overlooked linguistic feature can be found everywhere—across languages and time. As evidence: "we find this same process of the formation of the compound tenses independently at work in the Teutonic family" ("III. The Factive," p. 45), "the frequent substitution of the dative for the Latin subjective genitive is worthy of notice" ("V. On the Genitive," p. 67), and the lists of examples such as Lang's (X.) lengthy catalog of uses of the "collective singular" in Spanish as well as Latin, Portuguese, and French.

All arguments employ common *topoi*, or "premises of a general nature that can serve as the bases for values and hierarchies" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 84). Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) explain that because each common *topos* can be "confronted by one that is contrary to it….It is accordingly possible to characterize societies not only by the particular values they prize most but by the intensity with which they adhere" to a common *topos* (p. 85). The *Transactions* contributors' use of the common *topos* Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca characterize as the *topos* of "order" is noteworthy for its prevalence throughout the publication and what it can tell us about the values of this community. The order *topos* affirms "the superiority of that which is earlier over that which is later" (p. 93) and can be illustrated

clearly in Von Jagemann frequent asides in "V. On the Genitive in Old French" such as: "We can no more say, as Villehardouin was permitted to do: *il n'avoient mie pooir de purchacier viandes* 74.39, and a pity it is that this liberty has been lost, for there is nothing more monotonous in the French language than the occurrence on one page of a dozen or more of partitive genitives without any real *raison d'être*" (p. 73) and "It seems doubtful whether the Modern French has gained anything in exchange for the lost freedom of the language of Villehardouin's time" (p. 83). The prevalence of the order *topos* indicates that this community valued the ancient roots of modern languages; each tracing of an etymology is an expression cherishing the past. And, particularly as Von Jagemann presents this *topos*, it may also be a preliminary form of the later literary scholars' *contemptus mundi topos*, which assumes "despair over the condition and course of modern society" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 88). Karl Popper (1966) points out that such a view of history as retrogression has been historically tied to conservative moral and political agendas. Thus, though members of a new field challenging the old guard of Classicism, the contributors to *Transactions 1884-5* valorize nonetheless a linguistic, if not also social, conservatism.

Sentence-level Analysis

MacDonald's (1992; 1994) analysis of sentence subjects in twelve articles published between 1981 and 1990 in three disciplinary subfields of psychology, history, and literary studies (attachment research in the field of developmental psychology, social history of Colonial New England in the field of history, and Renaissance New

Historicism in the field of literary studies) allows us to compare an important syntactic feature's function among different disciplines' discourse. MacDonald's rationale for focusing on the sentence subject is multifaceted; a discipline's treatment of agency, style, and topic can be addressed through such an analysis. Her classification system distinguishes "the phenomenal and epistemic, with the phenomenal consisting of the material that the researcher studies and the epistemic consisting of the methods, conceptual tools, and previous research that the researcher brings to bear on the material" (1994, p. 157). These two larger categories are further subdivided to distinguish phenomenal subjects which are particulars ("nouns referring to specific people, places, or objects"), groups of particulars, and nouns which refer to "the attributes, properties, action, behavior, or motivations and thoughts" of the particular or group nouns (p. 158). The epistemic nouns are further categorized as either reasons (abstractions imposed upon the phenomena by the researcher), research (references to other scholars), "isms" (nouns referring to schools of thought), and audience (pronouns addressing or including the reader).

MacDonald's findings are presented in Table 1.3. MacDonald (1992) sees in the prevalent use of epistemic Class 4 and 5 "Reasons" and "Research" in the sentence subject position in the articles presenting attachment research in the field of developmental psychology an indication that "psychologists place greater importance on cooperative disciplinary knowledge making than historians and literary academics" (p. 547), a distinction that perhaps can be drawn between the sciences and the humanities. The notable dominance of phenomenal particulars in the sentence subject

position in the articles by New Historicists in the field of literary studies suits their attempts to immerse readers in the particulars of Renaissance life--an attempt that MacDonald notes has been criticized by some in this field as drawing attention away for the constructedness of history (552). MacDonald suggests that the way academics typically draw attention to this constructedness is is through use of Class 4 and 5 "Reasons" and "Research."

TABLE 1.3: Distribution of Sentence Subjects in MacDonald's (1992, 1994) Study (by percentages).

	Psychology	History	Literature
Phenomenal Classes			
Class 1: Particulars	0.1	6.0	30.0
Class 2: Groups	27.0	44.0	10.0
Class 3: Attributes	11.0	26.0	44.0
Epistemic Classes			
Class 4: Reasons	49.0	15.0	7.0
Class 5: Research	12.0	6.0	5.0
Class 6: Isms	0.1	0.0	0.2
Class 7: Audience	1.0	3.0	4.0

MacDonald's categorization scheme provides a means to examine the treatment of phenomena, research apparatus, and audience in the beginnings of the MLA's professional discourse. We can also compare the sentence subjects in the first publication of the MLA with MacDonald's results to make tentative observations on the nature and evolution of a discipline's discourse. Using MacDonald's classification

system, I categorized the sentence subjects of eight of the articles in *Transactions*.[2] Three of the articles analyzed are philological investigations, and another three are pedagogical treatises. The remaining two are "I. Richter's Correspondence with a Lady, Some un-published Letters" and "XI. A Review of Edmund Gosse's 'From Shakespeare to Pope.'" As a check on the reliability of my analyses, a second rater, a graduate student studying rhetoric and composition, was trained in MacDonald's classification scheme and asked to analyze the sentence subjects appearing in 10% of the paragraphs randomly selected from each of the eight articles (22 paragraphs and 144 sentence subjects in total). The correlation between the second rater's classifications and my own using Cohen's kappa was .711. The results appear in Table 1.4. Table 1.5 presents the average results across the philological investigations and across the pedagogical treatises.

The differences in sentence subjects between the philological investigations and the pedagogical treaties are not as striking as the differences among the later fields of psychology, history, and literary studies, and perhaps this should not be surprising because these writers, despite the conflicts Bright paints of them in 1902, are self-identified members of the same professional discourse community. We can see that the philological investigations use more sentence subjects categorized as phenomenal groups, with von Jagemann providing a typical example: "A peculiar kind of the

[2] Because of the different nature of the subject matter treated by these philologists in comparison to MacDonald's psychologists, historians, and literary theorists, I had to revisit the definitions of MacDonald's categories. For instance, I treated nouns referring to linguistic features such as "the German factive" as Class 2 "groups" because I understood the term to refer to all linguistic phenomena that are factives in German.

subjective genitive is the genitive of apposition, which is already used in Latin, but to a much smaller extent than in Modern French" (V. p. 67), and in this way the philological investigations are closer to the conventions of the later fields of psychology and history than the pedagogical treatises. Though the pedagogical treatises have a considerably greater frequency of sentence subject nouns categorized as epistemic research, it should be noted that the majority of these are the first person pronoun used much in the spirit of the following example: "I can substantiate this proposition by a particular fact of my own experience" ("XVII. On the Use of English in Teaching Foreign Languages," p. 222). As these treatises raise the procedural stasis, their use of the first person pronoun to assert their claims, suggest their proposals, and present their experience is an understandable *ethos*-building strategy in a new field with little history of pedagogical research. The philological investigations at the lower stases use a mixture of the first person pronoun and nouns referring to other researchers at a frequency in keeping with the later conventions of the fields of history and literary studies. Fortier provides clear examples of such first and third person subjects: "I believe, however, that this mode of speaking is very rare, and that the possessive adjectives are much more used" (VII. p. 102) and "my friend, Prof. A. M. Elliot, has shown with what tenacity the Canadians have clung to their original language" (VII. p. 96). Though often not appearing in the sentence subject position, it is worth mentioning that these philological investigations refer quite regularly to previously existing bodies of research, many times in citations, and with one ("XVIII. The Realgymnasium Question") including a four-page bibliography employing many of the later MLA conventions for a "Works Cited" page.

TABLE 1.4: Distribution of Sentence Subjects (by percentages) in eight of the articles appearing in *Transactions of the Modern Language Association of America, 1884-5*.

	Article							
	I.	**II.**	**III.**	**IV.**	**V.**	**VI.**	**VII.**	**XI**
Phenomenal Classes								
Class 1: Particulars	66	28	13	16	26	28	26	26
Class 2: Groups	17	30	34	22	34	10	42	11
Class 3: Attributes	2	13	19	5	16	17	6	29
Epistemic Classes								
Class 4: Reasons	6	18	16	18	12	7	12	15
Class 5: Research	3	5	3	23	4	23	10	2
Class 6: Isms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Class 7: Audience	7	6	14	15	8	14	4	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 1.5: Distribution of Sentence Subjects (by percentages) in the sample of articles from *Transactions of the Modern Language Association of America, 1884-5* when grouped according to their primary, apparent purpose.

	Philological Investigations (III., V., VII.)	**Pedagogical Treatises (II., IV., VI.)**
Phenomenal Classes		
Class 1: Particulars	21	25
Class 2: Groups	36	19
Class 3: Attributes	14	13
Epistemic Classes		
Class 4: Reasons	14	13
Class 5: Research	5	18
Class 6: Isms	0	0
Class 7: Audience	9	12
Total	100	100

Epistemic subjects referring to audience are notably more common in the first publication of the MLA than the articles in the later subfields of psychology, history,

and literary studies. The recurrent use of first-person plural pronouns speaks to the contributors' awareness of the specialized and professional nature of their audience as well as, when compared to the relative infrequency of subjects classified as "audience" in MacDonald's study, a sense of community defining and building in a new field. Despite the great number of pedagogical treatises appearing in the publication, there is indication that the definition of this new field was already turning away from pedagogical concerns to pure philological scholarship in the apology McElroy begins his "XV. The Requirements in English for Admission to College" with: "The paper I have ventured to lay before the Association on this occasion very likely needs an apology. The questions it raises have none of the interest that attaches to questions in pure scholarship: they are practical questions in pedagogy…. But I am sure that these questions are of importance—and to us. As teachers, we can not get away from practical questions" (p. 195). Furthermore, the frequent use of French, German, and Spanish without corresponding English translation suggests an assumption on the part of contributors of the audience's scholarly familiarity with these modern languages.

So if the contributors to the first publication of the MLA were aware of their role in shaping a new professional field, a field that in hindsight scholars such as Ohmann, Graff, Warner, and Hutcheon see as the origin of today's literary studies, how do these contributors treat "literature" in their articles? Perhaps by now it should not be surprising to observe that very few of their phenomenal sentence subjects refer to texts or authors; instead they refer to languages and linguistic features. Carter's "I. Richter's Correspondence with a Lady, some unpublished Letters," which doesn't fit neatly into

either category of philological investigation or pedagogical treatise, is perhaps the most recognizable treatment of a text to literary scholars today. In his "Remembrance and Reflection: *PMLA* 1884-1982," John H. Fisher (1984) characterizes Carter's as "the only article that is even faintly literary" (p. 399) in the volume. Carter's article is distinctive in its use of 66% phenomenal particular sentence subjects, most of which refer to the author Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, his correspondent Frau. Kropf, and their letters. Between his translations of Richter's letters, Carter interjects narrative of Richter's life and claims that the letters are "worth translating" (p. 5). Carter argues their worthiness by invoking the common *topos* of essence which accords a higher value to "that which best incarnates a type, an essence, or a function" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 94). Carter asserts "some of these letters are models of epistolary grace in the original, and there is scarcely one of them that has not at least one charming expression or elegant turn" (p. 21). This purely belletristic evaluative praise of a text is, at least, not foreign to later literary scholars. When compared to the other uses of texts by other contributors to this volume, its familiarity may be more apparent. In "X. The Collective Singular in Spanish," Lang explains that he has drawn his etymological data from a collection of Spanish poems, at least one from each century between the twelfth and the nineteenth (p. 134). Von Jagemann explains his etymological data source in "V. On The Genitive in Old French": "As the representative of the Old French I have selected the "*Histoire de la conquête de Constantinople*" by Villehardouin since this writer is really the first original French prose writer of any account" (p. 64). Most curious of all, though, is Fortier's

"translation" of "a few lines of 'la Chanson de Roland' in our Louisiana patois" (VII. p. 110) with which he concludes his investigation into the "Negro-French Dialect." Many of the articles do not refer to texts or mention "imaginative literature" at all.

Conclusion

This analysis of the first publication of the MLA clearly lends greater support to Graff's depiction of the goal and values of the philologists who were its contributors than to Ohmann's version. Though pedagogy, as we have seen, was treated in its pages, its treatment was in support of training and preparing the next generation of philologists. These pedagogical treatises seem written in anticipation of the day when such issues would be resolved and the need to deliberate them further diminished, allowing the discourse community to focus on pursuing with greater comprehensiveness its research program. Thus the development in this direction that Ohmann laments is in fact eagerly anticipated by the scholars he upholds as offering an alternative ideal.

However, Graff's depiction of these philologists' research program as unrecognizable when seen from the vantage point of the literary scholars that make up the MLA today, as well as Eagleton's (1983) characterization of philology as "one of the most strenuous antagonists of English" (p. 29), may, in fact, be an overstatement of the case. Several key rhetorical conventions we see developing in this first volume have gone on to become so entrenched as to be taken for granted. Graff credits philology with forging the structure of language departments along national lines, regularizing specialization through the granting of graduate degrees, and legitimizing

the study of the vernacular in an academic climate steeped in classical language study. And this analysis of the first publication of the MLA supports an understanding of the work of late nineteenth-century American philologists as legitimizing their field; the creation of a highly specialized discourse community is a mark of professionalization. But still further, it also illustrates how these early MLA members prepared the climate of their forum for publication to encourage specialized warrants and epideictic arguments at the lower stases, a climate Fahnestock and Secor saw fully developed and presupposed a century later.

MacDonald (1994), citing Thomas Kuhn, describes "the comparative insulation of the discourse community in science; the community's insulation from extraprofessional concerns allows its discourse to develop without too much turmoil from competing viewpoints" (pp. 30-31). This rhetorical analysis of the first publication of the MLA shows us how, through shared assumptions on the worthwhile nature of their scholarship and an awareness of the specialized nature of their audience, the contributors forged for themselves the insulation required for a young scientific community's research and discourse to develop. The deliberative rhetoric of the procedural pleas and debates of the volume's pedagogical treatises worked to create consensus on issues this professional community appeared to be divided on, particularly the place of philology in curriculums, and propose courses of action. Notwithstanding their unlike treatments of literature, this open deliberation is perhaps one of the most striking differences between the arguments in the first publication of the MLA and the Association's later literary arguments. Fisher's (1984) retrospective tell us that

> after this initial volume, the number of pedagogical…articles dwindled rapidly—three in volume 2, four in volume 3, only one or two a year after that….the development after volume 4 reflects the second major concern that had led to the founding of the association and to the creation of its publication: the determination to develop American philological and linguistic scholarship to rival that being produced in Europe and England. (p. 399)

Thus, the discourse published in *PMLA* quickly moved away from deliberative rhetoric to self-celebratory epideictic rhetoric that "affirms the shared values of a community and harmonizes new insights with what is already believed" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 94). Much as the later literary arguments Fahnestock and Secor analyzed, these epideictic, philological arguments create and reinforce a community of scholars sharing the same values (p. 94).

Thus, though it clarifies how little the content of later literary criticism shares with this key professional organization's first publication, this analysis reveals that the sense of audience, rhetorical purpose, and issues worthy of scholarly debate the contributors to this volume promoted went on to become conventions of not only contributors to *PMLA* but to other, more recently established, professional journals as well. While this discourse community has embraced significant, substantive change at moments, it has conserved its original rhetorical forums. Allen J. Frantzen (1990) states that "the orderly and ordering procedures of philology had little to do with the tasks of the rest of departments of English, which by the 1970s had moved through three phases

in the United States: the philological, the historical, and the New Critical" (p. 83). The scientism that lead these philologists to highlight the epistemic over the phenomenal in their sentence style and treat literary texts as sources of data may have been quickly succeeded by a New Critical emphasis on textual particulars and their attributes within literary worlds. But the isolation that fostered the development of shared and tacit special *topoi* and a focus on the issues represented by the lower, categorical stases endured. Though the "real progress" that Bright celebrated in 1902 that carried the MLA away from "the girls' finishing school" and into the "laboratories of the University" may seem to literary scholars today to have momentarily derailed the real progress of their discipline, we can see that it was a move that established and set in motion their disciplinary discourse community.

CHAPTER TWO

"Never Obvious or Simple": "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism" Revisited

The work of rhetoricians Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor has been innovative in its application of concepts from Classical rhetoric to analyses of late twentieth century academic discourse. Convinced of the power of rhetorical theories of stasis and *topoi* as inventional tools in their classrooms (1988, p. 428), their research has focused on the power of these tools as instruments of audience analysis. While rhetoricians investigating academic discourse have tended to focus on scientific discourse (Bazerman, 1988; Blakeslee, 1993, 1997; Charney, 1993; Dowdey, 1992; Fahnestock, 1986, 1999; Haas, 1994; Herrington, 1985; Myers, 1985; Rymer, 1988; Winsor, 1996), Fahnestock and Secor are among the first rhetoricians to concentrate in any depth on the rhetorical function and nature of literary criticism as the discourse of a professional community. Fahnestock and Secor sought to demonstrate the usefulness of Classical rhetoric in investigations of disciplinary discourse (Fahnestock & Secor, 1988; Secor, 1984) while contributing to the then budding attention to the nature of literary argument by literary theorists such as Cary Nelson, Wayne Booth, Stanley Fish, Jonathan Culler, and Terry Eagleton (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991). Drawing on the work of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintillian, Stephen Toulmin, and Chaim Pereleman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, they argue that the most frequent rhetorical forum of literary criticism is epideictic and that the most frequent stasis issues that literary criticism addresses are

existence, definition, and evaluation and that several common and special *topoi* (or *loci* following Perelman) typically bespeak the arguments' underlying assumptions.

Fahnestock and Secor derived their conclusions from samples of articles drawn from the January 1986 *PMLA* (Fahnestock & Secor, 1988), the October 1984 *PMLA* (Secor, 1984), and a group of articles from "a selection of journals of established reputation" published between 1978 and 1982 (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 77). Prior to their work, James Sosnoski (1979), a literary scholar, had applied Toulmin's conception of warrants in analyses of articles on James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to expose the differing "reading warrants," each the theoretical lens of different critical schools of thought, which lead to conflicting readings of the same passages.[1] And Charles Bazerman (1981), interested primarily in viewing literary argument as a foil to scientific argument, contrasted some assumptions underpinning one article of literary criticism with a molecular biology article and a sociology article, finding the literary criticism to be more particularistic, idiosyncratic, and personal. Susan Peck MacDonald (1987, 1989, 1992, 1994) further contributed to the rhetorical branch of research with analyses of problem definition and use of sentence subjects, finding that scholarly discourse in the fields of psychology and history to be more likely to highlight research methods and warrants than the written discourse of Renaissance New Historicist scholars. Michael Carter's (1992) fuller characterization of literary criticism as private epideictic sought to explain the virulent attacks literary scholarship faces periodically in the popular media. And George Pullman (1994) sketched several

possible special *topoi* of literary interpretation in his argument to reinvigorate invention in composition and thus reconfigure the institutional subordination of composition to literature. However, Pullman's evidence of his suggested literary special *topoi*, "intention (or anti-intention), structure, context, influence, origin, significance, implication, sublimation, signs of ideological issues and conflicts, form and substance, ambiguity, indeterminacy, etymology, figurality" (p. 380), is anecdotal and, as he acknowledges, he does not attempt to adequately distinguish which *topoi* are currently favored in the field's discourse and which have receded in prominence.

A commonality running through these investigations of the rhetoric of literary criticism is the comparison of literary criticism to the discourse of other academic disciplines, particularly scientific disciplines. Even Sosnoski contrasts the seemingly infinite multiplicity of critical interpretations of any given text with the concept of falsifiability of scientific methodologies (1979, p. 43). Fahnestock and Secor's analyses contrast literary criticism's epideictic functions with the clearly more proposal and action-oriented implications of scientific discourse. Instead of having significant consequences for the lives of those outside of the disciplinary discourse community, Fahnestock and Secor portray literary criticism as the value-celebrating sermons of an enclosed religious community (1991, p. 94). Carter's (1992) emphasis on the private nature of literary criticism's epideictic which tends to baffle readers from the broader public supports this understanding. Bazerman's characterization of literary criticism as

[1] His description of these "reading warrants" is very similar to Fahnestock and Secor's (1991) paradigm *topos*.

particularistic and personal as opposed to the additions to a communal knowledge that scientific texts present (1981, p. 378) and MacDonald's (1992, 1994) finding that scholarly discourse in the fields of psychology and history is more likely to highlight research methods and warrants than the discourse of Renaissance New Historicist scholars further contribute to an understanding of literary criticism as an isolated enterprise entirely different in methodology and purpose from scientific discourse.

Yet despite Fahnestock and Secor's acknowledgement that their work in this area is a preliminary step in an examination of historically variable discourse, little else has been done to develop this line of research. Moreover, Fahnestock and Secor's analyses of literary criticism, conducted almost two decades ago, deserve to be reexamined in light of some significant changes that have occurred in the field of literary studies. In this chapter I intend to revisit their work and, with some modification, apply their methodology to a more recent sample of the discipline's discourse. I intend to contribute to this line of research by refining and, as warranted, challenging the picture of literary studies as an isolated, personal, and "not knowledge-building" (MacDonald, 1992, p. 556) disciplinary discourse community the literature on this topic has thus far provided.

Several of the aspects of Fahnestock and Secor's analyses that might give literary critics cause to question their generalizations are readily acknowledged by Fahnestock and Secor. They include the biases that informed their sample selections and their apparent preference for scientific discourse. Indeed, for an analysis that contributes to our understanding of the rhetoric of literary criticism by its attention to

underlying assumptions and implied purposes not to acknowledge its own biases would be incongruous. However, these biases deserve further examination, and any follow-up study, such as the present one, should attempt to address them.

In their stasis analysis and Secor's application of Perelman's conception of *loci*, Fahnestock and Secor examined articles from single issues of *PMLA*. For their comparisons with stases employed in scientific discourse, *PMLA* seemed an ideal counterpart to *Science* because each is "directed broadly at people in its field rather than at specialists" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1988, p. 435). For Secor's analysis of *loci* the *PMLA* embodied "at least the MLA's judgment of a norm for excellent criticism from the manuscripts submitted to it" (p. 101), and because of its privileged position in maintaining and supporting the hierarchical aspects of this broad disciplinary discourse community, "like it or not the *PMLA* does represent the literary profession's definition of itself" (p. 102). However, its lack of specialization and its privileged position in the field could also be presented as reasons for selecting other journals over *PMLA* when trying to examine "typical," "average," or "normal" literary criticism (Secor, 1984, p. 101).

In fact, a recent editorial in *PMLA* (Alonso, 2001) complained of a drastic drop in the submission rate of unsolicited articles[2] and requested that the membership consider *PMLA* when submitting their work. But the editorial apparently inspired only complaints directed at the journal and explanations for why scholars no longer submit to *PMLA*. In the next issue, nine letter writers responded that the "word on the street is

that *PMLA*'s review of manuscripts is arbitrary, capricious, and often unfair" (Dean, 2001, p. 651; see also Sammons, 2001), that the rejection rate of 95 percent is too high a professional risk (Sammons, 2001; Singer, 2001), that the journal encourages specialized jargon (Bowden, 2001; Hunter, 2001), and that the journal no longer represents the interests of certain subspecialties within the field (Horowitz, 2001; Hunter, 2001; Stringer, 2001) (perhaps paradoxically at least one writer expressed both this complaint and the former), among other complaints. According to the current editor, the decision of *PMLA*'s Editorial Board in 1986 to solicit articles as supplements to the journal's blindly reviewed submissions, has, because of the decline in both numbers of submission and acceptances, "managed to overwhelm and overtake the journal's core" (Alonso, 2001, p. 11). Simultaneously, *PMLA*'s continued reliance on author-anonymous review has, according to Shumway's analysis of "The Star System in Literary Studies," "diminished *PMLA*'s influence" (1997, p. 97). According to Shumway, *PMLA*, "once the dominant forum for publication in the discipline," has "lost its standing to new theory journals" (p. 97) that rely on and build the reputations of scholars applying paradigmatically theorists' work. One respondent to the editor's plea for submissions put it this way: "Even though the MLA membership automatically entails a subscription to *PMLA*, it's a mistake to imagine that the parent organization's membership and *PMLA*'s actual audience are coextensive" (Stringer, 2001, p. 653). Though these developments occurred after Fahnestock and Secor conducted their

[2] "The number of submissions each year has seen an overall decline since its maximum of 660 in 1977 to a low of 191 in 2000" (Alonso, 2001, p. 11).

analyses using issues of *PMLA*, clearly any update of their work should expand the pool of journals from which a sample is drawn.

Fahnestock and Secor's (1991) analysis of both stasis and special *topoi*, "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism," avoids some problems associated with a sample drawn from one journal by selecting articles from several "journals of established reputation" (p. 77) published between 1978 and 1982 (though published after "Perelman's Loci in Literary Argument" and "The Stases in Scientific and Literary Argument," "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism" was first delivered as a paper at the Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, July 1982). According to their bibliography, Fahnestock and Secor's (1991) sample consisted of four articles from *PMLA*, three from *New Literary History*, three from *Modern Philology*, two from *Novel*, two from *ELH*, two from *JEGP*, one from *Criticism*, one from *Victorian Studies*, one from *Studies in Philology*, and one from *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. However, their sample selection still exhibits biases potentially influential of outcomes. Selection was not random but was intended to include criticism on a variety of subjects, authors, literary circles, and time periods, yet was, as they acknowledge, biased "toward the nineteenth century and toward fiction" (1991, p. 77). Additionally, their selection "avoided articles on literatures other than English and American and textual studies that depend on physical evidence" (p. 77). Any update of their work should seek to address these biases if for no other reason than the recent increase in criticism identified as Post-Colonial by literary scholars in the U.S.

Worth noting, and perhaps more troublesome to their literary scholar readers, are proclivities within Fahnestock and Secor's interpretation of their findings. Though identifying themselves as literary scholars when describing their exigency, "We who are so quick to identify the conventions employed by the literary figures we study should also be aware of the rhetorical constraints under which our own discourse operates" (1991, p. 77), the tone of their analyses takes on a witty playfulness that seems to generate from a point of view of some distance from their subject. Though their stated purpose lies at the stasis of definition, and the bulk of their analysis does operate at this stasis, their concluding remarks repeatedly venture into the stasis of evaluation, and that evaluation repeatedly points to the flaws in the rhetoric of literary criticism. In argumentative maneuvers intended to illustrate the epideictic character of literary criticism, Fahnestock and Secor point to several examples of weak argumentation and illogic within the literary criticism. For instance, they claim that one of the articles "may not rigorously support its thesis" (p. 81), while another "founder[s]" (p. 81) because of the critic's "stretched definition of what constitutes a question" (p. 82), and another critic's "argument becomes problematic because he never defends his criteria of judgment" (p. 83). At moments such as these, Fahnestock and Secor's terms turn from descriptive to faultfinding; they ultimately even find and list stylistic flaws within their sample (see pp. 92-93). Their point in all this demonstration of defect is to reveal that literary criticism does not meet standards "most readers" (p. 83) expect from public discourse because it is epideictic, maintaining and building a specialized community of readers and writers.

Those feeling some sting from their criticism might ask: from where are these abstract standards of normal or typical discourse originating? On what grounds, from the perspective of what discourse community, comes a statement of ideal standards such as "The evidence offered in a categorical proposition argument should usually be typical in both number and kind of the subject term" (p. 82)? Fahnestock and Secor's commentary indicates that the discourse against which they measure literary criticism and find it lacking is scientific. The concluding discussion of "The Stases in Scientific and Literary Argument" makes this comparison clear. Following an explanation of how "science articles will lead to specific proposals and altered actions (though perhaps not by the scientists who wrote the articles)," they state: "It would be hard to imagine a similar consequence for future action following a reevaluation of the Intimations Ode…. There is something more than a little artificial in the literary arguments that reopen such questions of relative value for authors who have long been so highly valued, and that have no implications for altered future action" (p. 441). Though they are careful to discuss the value of discourse which shapes and reaffirms a community's values, these moments of negative evaluation suggest that Fahnestock and Secor value arguments that achieve the proposal stasis more highly than those which rest at earlier stases. And though Secor states that "to call literary arguments epideictic is to be neither cynical nor dismissive" (1984, p. 110), one can sense their provocative delight in pointing out that "obviously, here we stumble on an endless circularity in literary criticism…. We are led to ask, 'Do we have literary criticism because literature is complex, or is literature complex because we have literary criticism?' We cannot

resolve this circularity; we can only point to its existence" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 90). Though their wit may have served as needed critique, or may have been a response to the then climate of conflict between rhetoric and composition and literary studies, research seeking to revisit and extend their analyses must take a more generous approach towards literary scholarship and attempt not to start from similar judgments. Their criticism may be valid for the sample they studied, but it may no longer be applicable. For instance, a condition of inward scrutiny that lacks connection to real world actions may be a condition which more recent theoretical approaches to literature have sought to respond to and transform.

I seek to address these concerns with an analysis of more recently published literary criticism. I should acknowledge, however, that my analysis operates, as did Fahnestock and Secor's, by applying concepts from Classical rhetoric paradigmatically to contemporary discourse, and as such shares in the oversights and exaggerations their analysis may have produced. It is interesting to note that, as rhetoricians working within the complex terrain of English departments, our analyses apply several of the special *topoi* Fahnestock and Secor first categorized, such as the ubiquity, appearance/reality, and paradigm *topoi*. Yet while not seeking to replicate their ultimately rather mocking evaluation, I do seek to perform my analysis from a similar distance, a distance which allows me to read literary criticism as an "outsider" to the discourse, but an outsider who is familiar with several of the insiders. My replication, then, of much of Fahnestock and Secor's methodology will allow for a tracing of the development of an academic discourse community over time, as well as a performance

of an ideal much discussed but seldom enacted in rhetoric and composition research which employs empirical methodology—the replication and extension of previous scholars' methodologies (see Haswell et al., 1999).

Though following closely Fahnestock and Secor's work, the construction of my sample of disciplinary discourse differs significantly from the samples used in related rhetorical analyses. Bazerman's rhetorical analyses of scientific discourse in *Shaping Written Knowledge* (1988) focused on articles published over time in single journals. For his analysis of experimental reports in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, he examined all the reports published in the journal in every fifth volume from 1 to 40 and every tenth volume for volume 50 to 90, thus covering the years 1665-1800. For his analysis of the *Physical Review*, Bazerman narrowed his focus to articles on the specialty of spectroscopy from every ten years of the journal between 1893-1900. Similarly, MacDonald's (1994) analysis of disciplinary discourse focused on textual conversations taking place within subdisciplines, and her selection of discourse in developmental psychology, New England colonial history, and Renaissance New Historicism was limited to five articles per subdiscipline written in the 1980s by "writers who cited each other or were in other ways demonstrably participating in the same subdisciplinary discourse" (1994, p. 201). Likewise, Sosnoski (1979) limited his analysis of warrants to articles from 1928-1977 discussing one work, James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Though focusing on the common *topoi* utilized in public, non-specialized discussions of controversial literary works, Eberly (2000) also narrowed the focus of her investigation to the discourse surrounding the publication

of four novels, *Ulysses*, *Tropic of Cancer*, *American Psycho*, and *Mercy*. The specificity of these studies undoubtedly allows them greater confidence and precision in their conclusions. However, like Fahnestock and Secor, I am interested here in investigating the characteristics of a discourse community that is recognized by all who participate in it as extremely diverse and divisive. Are there generalizations that can be made across the variety of styles and subject matters this discourse engages? Are there features common to a discourse community of literary scholars that transcend or run through the textual conversations of the subspecialites? The answers to questions such as these should not only be useful to those interested in the definitional limits of the abstract entities known as discourse communities but also to those interested in what is attempted each semester in undergraduate courses designed to introduce this discipline.

Method

The Sample: The sample consists of a total of 28 articles. To allow for comparisons across time, I drew an initial sample from the same ten journals Fahnestock and Secor used in "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism." However, I first consulted the MLA's 2001 *Directory of Periodicals* to determine the circulation rates of these ten journals as a check of their continued viability in the field. Though circulation rates are a very imprecise measure of the vitality and significance of a journal--one need only remember the readers' responses to the plea for submissions from the editor of *PMLA*--they at least provide an impression of the presence of a journal in campus libraries and faculty mailboxes. *PMLA* has by far the largest circulation in this group, 33,000. For the remaining nine, the circulation range varied from 3000 (*Victorian*

Studies) to 1000 (*Criticism*) with an average rate of 2140. Circulation rates such as these suggest a continued presence of these journals since Fahnestock and Secor's analysis.[3]

However, in an attempt to broaden Fahnestock and Secor's sample, I also drew from two additional journals, *diacritics* and *Critical Inquiry*. According to the MLA's 2001 *Directory of Periodicals*, the circulation rate is 1600 for *diacritics* and 4500 for *Critical Inquiry*. Perhaps more significant than their comparable circulation rates is the attention these journals have recently received in the field for their more "cutting edge" sensibility. In his analysis of the trends in literary criticism in the 1990s, Jeffrey Williams (1999) mentions both journals as havens to works of "high theory" developed in America most vigorously since Fahnestock and Secor's analysis. In particular, he describes *Critical Inquiry* as "the journal of record for theory for the last twenty-five years" (1999, p. 429) and "the home of high theory" (p. 431). He characterizes *New Literary History*, a journal in Fahnestock and Secor's sample, and *boundary 2*, which only has a current circulation of 850, as "filial journals" (p. 429) which have "ceded place as leading journals to which young scholars might devotedly go to find vanguard work" (p. 430). In his critique of "The Star System in Literary Studies," Shumway (1997) concurs on the rise of *Critical Inquiry* and *New Literary History*, journals he

[3] According to the MLA's 2001 Directory of Periodicals, there are 217 journals published in the United States and listed under the subject heading of "literature" that have circulation rates greater than or equal to 1,000 copies, the low-end range of my sample. With these same criteria, there are 82 journals with circulation rates greater than or equal to 2,140, the average rate of my sample. And there are 35 journals with circulation rates greater than or equal to 4,500 copies, the high-end range of my sample (excluding *PMLA*). Bear in mind that these figures likely include journals that publish contemporary literature and would not be considered journals of scholarly literary criticism.

describes as "devoted to theory" and "among the most influential in the discipline" (p. 95).

To correct for Fahnestock and Secor's admitted preference for works on nineteenth-century fiction, I randomly selected five percent of the articles from each of these twelve journals published between 1999 and 2001. This procedure allowed me to include greater numbers of articles in the sample from journals that are published with greater frequency or that publish a greater number of articles per issue. Thus I hoped to produce a sample representative of, or at least quantitatively proportionate to, the discourse disseminated in the field in 1999-2001.

Like Fahnestock and Secor, I excluded from my sample items such as interviews, reviews of recent scholarly books, and "articles whose subject is itself interpretation" (Secor, 1984, p. 110), such as Leila Silvana May's "The Strong-Arming of Desire: A Reconsideration of Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*" (in *ELH*) and Jonathan Culler's "Anderson and the Novel" (in *diacritics*). I also excluded articles by scholars in other disciplines, which were particularly frequent in the interdisciplinary *Critical Inquiry*. Like Fahnestock and Secor, I am interested here in professional "literary arguments" by which we mean "articles that interpret literary texts" (Secor, 1984, p. 110). Of course the definition of "literary texts" is fluid and at any time arguable (in fact, this is frequently argued in this field), but I found it necessary to eliminate arguments such as May's and Culler's which reflect only on previous arguments by other literary scholars to avoid potentially comparing several

apples and only one or two oranges. Articles such as theirs did not appear in a high frequency in my sample selection--only four such articles were eliminated.

The sample used in the subsequent analysis appears in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: Articles in the sample. The inception date of the journals and their circulation rates obtained from the MLA's 2001 Directory of Periodicals.

Author and Title of Article	Date Published	Journal (Circulation Rate of Journal) (Date of Journal's inception)
Albrecht, James M., "Saying Yes and Saying No: Individualist Ethics in Ellison, Burke, and Emerson"	January 1999	PMLA (33,000) (1884)
Berger, Courtney, "When Bad Things Happen to Bad People: Liability and Individual Consciousness in Adam Bede and Silas Marner"	Summer 2000	Novel (1,750) (1967)
Burton, Stacy, "Rereading Faulkner: Authority, Criticism, and The Sound and the Fury"	May 2001	Modern Philology (1,600) (1903)
DiPasquale, Theresa M., "Woman's Desire for Man in Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum"	July 2000	Journal of English and Germanic Philology (1,800) (1897)
Elder, John, "The Poetry of Experience"	Summer 1999	New Literary History (2,500) (1969)
Gallagher, Catherine, "A History of the Precedent: Rhetorics of Legitimation in Women's Writing"	Winter 2000	Critical Inquiry (4,500) (1974)
Gamer, Michael, "Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama"	Winter 1999	ELH (1,940) (1934)
Geyh, Paula E., "Triptych Time: The Experiential Historiography of Meridel Le Sueur's The Dread Road"	Winter 2001	Criticism (1,000) (1959)
Gigante, Denise, "Forming Desire: On the Eponymous In Memoriam Stanza"	March 1999	Nineteenth-Century Literature (2,500) (1945-1949 as Trollopian, 1949-1986 as Nineteenth-Century Fiction)
Gigante, Denise, "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating"	Summer 2000	diacritics (1,600) (1970)
Gilbert, Sandra M., "Widow"	Summer 2001	Critical Inquiry (4,500) (1974)
Gilbert, Susan M., "'Rats' Alley': The Great War, Modernism, and the (Anti)Pastoral Elegy"	Winter 1999	New Literary History (2,500) (1969)

Author and Title of Article	Date Published	Journal (Circulation Rate of Journal) (Date of Journal's inception)
Hayton, Heather Richardson, "'Many privy thinges wimpled and folde': Governance and Mutual Obligation in Usk's Testament of Love"	Winter 1999	Studies in Philology (1,350) (1906)
Lynch, Jack, "The ground-work of stile": Johnson on the History of the Language"	Fall 2000	Studies in Philology (1,350) (1906)
Matz, Robert, "Slander, Renaissance Discourses of Sodomy, and Othello"	Summer 1999	ELH (1,940) (1934)
May, Brian, "Memorials to Modernity: Postcolonial Pilgrimage in Naipul and Rushdie"	Spring 2001	ELH (1,940) (1934)
Mazzola, Elizabeth, "Brothers' Keepers and Philip's Siblings: The Poetics of the Sidney Family"	Fall 1999	Criticism (1,000) (1959)
McCann, Sean, "The Imperiled Republic: Norman Mailer and the Poetics of Anti-liberalism"	Spring 2000	ELH (1,940) (1934)
McHugh, Susan, "Marrying My Bitch: J.R. Ackerley's Pack Sexualities"	Autumn 2000	Critical Inquiry (4,500) (1974)
Nagy, Andrea R,. "Defining English: Authenticity and Standardization in Seventeenth-Century Dictionaries"	Fall 1999	Studies in Philology
Perloff, Marjorie, "Language Poetry and the Lyric Subject: Ron Silliman's Albany, Susan Howe's Buffalo"	Spring 1999	Critical Inquiry (4,500) (1974)
Richardson, Angelique, "The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy"	Winter 1999/2000	Victorian Studies (3,000) (1957)
Schaub, Melissa, "Queen of the Air or Constitutional Monarch?: Idealism, Irony, and Narrative Power in Miss Marjoribanks"	September 2000	Nineteenth-Century Literature (2,500) (1945-1949 as Trollopian, 1949-1986 as Nineteenth-Century Fiction)
Shoulson, Jeffrey S., "The Embrace of the Fig Tree: Sexuality and Creativity in Midrash and in Milton"	Winter 2000	ELH (1,940) (1934)
Staten, Henry, "Is Middlemarch Ahistorical?"	October 2000	PMLA (33,000) (1884)
Theisen, Bianca, "The Four Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke"	Winter 2000	New Literary History (2,500) (1969)
White, Paul A., "The Latin Men: The Norman Sources of the Scandinavian Kings' Sagas"	April 1999	Journal of English and Germanic Philology (1,800) (1897)
Zamir, Tzachi, "Upon One Bank and Shoal of Time: Literature, Nihilism, and Moral Philosophy"	Summer 2000	New Literary History (2,500) (1969)

Method of Rhetorical Analysis: I share the lens through which I read this sample of professional discourse with Fahnestock and Secor as well as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) and Toulmin (1964). This lens draws on categories first discussed by Classical rhetoricians to examine the "informal logic" and audience appeals frequently implicit in professional discourse due to the specialized nature of its community or readers. Like Fahnestock and Secor, I attempt to determine the stasis issues an article addresses and the special *topoi* it invokes. Classical rhetoricians primarily stressed the usefulness of these concepts as inventional tools, but as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca and Fahnestock and Secor have argued and demonstrated, they can be insightfully used "in reverse" as tools of audience analysis. The work of the rhetorician in this instance is to attempt to analyze after-the-fact the attitudes, values, and predispositions of an audience a rhetor attempted to entreat, deliberately or not, in his or her discourse.

My analysis, a rather straightforward, qualitative identification of claims and warrants, proceeded both deductively and inductively. I began by searching for signs of the five stases and Fahnestock and Secor's characterization of five special *topoi* while also keeping note of indications of warrants other than these five *topoi*. Thus as I proceeded, I frequently returned to articles I had previously analyzed to determine if warrants I had come to notice had been overlooked there. As I noticed several articles appearing to share a warrant, I quoted the evidentiary passages in a log. Because many of the articles in the sample present lengthy and multifaceted arguments that evidenced several stases and special *topoi*, I found it necessary to distinguish between primary and

secondary stases and *topoi*. For the stases, a primary designation indicates that the issue was a significant focus of the argument, either the article's central issue or one of several main issues the argument appeared to make. A secondary designation indicates that the issue was dealt with in passing with little or no reasoning or evidence offered in support. For the special *topoi*, a primary designation indicates that the *topos* played a significant or recurrent role in the argument warranting claims that were supported with evidence. A secondary designation indicates that the *topos* played a minor role in the argument warranting claims made in passing and with little or no supporting evidence.

Results and Discussion

Stasis issues addressed: Table 2.2 presents the results of my stasis analysis, indicating the major and minor stases each article addressed. The majority of the articles in this sample addressed issues at the "lower" categorical stases. Five (18%) dealt with the stasis of existence, twenty-four (86%) made definitional claims, twenty-one (75%) made evaluative claims, and five (18%) addressed the causal stasis. However, a respectable portion, four articles (14%), not only suggested the proposal stasis, but argued explicit proposal claims. In comparison, Fahnestock and Secor found existence and definitional propositions most frequently in their sample, and they note a few made overt evaluative claims. However, they saw implicit pushes towards the evaluative and proposal stases in every argument. Thus they read an article arguing the genre categorization of a literary work as implicitly arguing to more firmly establish that work's place in the literary canon and on syllabi.

TABLE 2.2: Stasis Issues Addressed By Each Article in the Sample. An ● indicates a significant, primary focus of the argument while a * indicates a minor, passing, or secondary point of the argument.

Author and Title of Article	Existence	Definition	Stasis Evaluation	Cause	Proposal
Albrecht, James M., "Saying Yes and Saying No: Individualist Ethics in Ellison, Burke, and Emerson"		*	●		
Berger, Courtney, "When Bad Things Happen to Bad People: Liability and Individual Consciousness in Adam Bede and Silas Marner"		●	● of Eliot's social theory of liability		
Burton, Stacy, "Rereading Faulkner: Authority, Criticism, and The Sound and the Fury"		*	● of past criticism		●
DiPasquale, Theresa M., "Woman's Desire for Man in Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum"		●	● of past criticism		
Elder, John, "The Poetry of Experience"			● ● of field of Ecocriticism		●
Gallagher, Catherine, "A History of the Precedent: Rhetorics of Legitimation in Women's Writing"		●	● of academic feminism		
Gamer, Michael, "Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama"		●	● of past criticism		
Geyh, Paula E., "Triptych Time: The Experiential Historiography of Meridel Le Sueur's The Dread Road"		●			
Gigante, Denise, "Forming Desire: On the Eponymous In Memoriam Stanza"		●	*	*	
Gigante, Denise, "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating"		●		*	
Gilbert, Sandra M., "Widow"		●			
Gilbert, Susan M., "'Rats' Alley': The Great War, Modernism, and the (Anti)Pastoral Elegy"		●	● of past criticism	*	

Author and Title of Article	Existence	Definition	Stasis Evaluation	Cause	Proposal
Hayton, Heather Richardson, "'Many privy thinges wimpled and folde': Governance and Mutual Obligation in Usk's Testament of Love"	●		* of past criticism		
Lynch, Jack, "The ground-work of stile": Johnson on the History of the Language"		●			
Matz, Robert, "Slander, Renaissance Discourses of Sodomy, and Othello"		●			
May, Brian, "Memorials to Modernity: Postcolonial Pilgrimage in Naipul and Rushdie"	*	●	● of past criticism		
Mazzola, Elizabeth, "Brothers' Keepers and Philip's Siblings: The Poetics of the Sidney Family"	●		● * of past criticism	*	
McCann, Sean, "The Imperiled Republic: Norman Mailer and the Poetics of Anti-liberalism"		●	●	*	
McHugh, Susan, "Marrying My Bitch: J.R. Ackerley's Pack Sexualities"		●			
Nagy, Andrea R,. "Defining English: Authenticity and Standardization in Seventeenth-Century Dictionaries"		●	● of past criticism		
Perloff, Marjorie, "Language Poetry and the Lyric Subject: Ron Silliman's Albany, Susan Howe's Buffalo"		●	● of field of L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E poetry and Postmodernism		*
Richardson, Angelique, "The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy"		●	● of past criticism		
Schaub, Melissa, "Queen of the Air or Constitutional Monarch?: Idealism, Irony, and Narrative Power in Miss Marjoribanks"		●	● of past criticism		
Shoulson, Jeffrey S., "The Embrace of the Fig Tree: Sexuality and Creativity in Midrash and in Milton"	●	●	● of past criticism		

Author and Title of Article	Existence	Definition	Stasis Evaluation	Cause	Proposal
Staten, Henry, "Is Middlemarch Ahistorical?"		●	● of past criticism		
Theisen, Bianca, "The Four Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke"		●	● of past criticism and previous theories of reading		
White, Paul A., "The Latin Men: The Norman Sources of the Scandinavian Kings' Sagas"	●		* of past criticism		
Zamir, Tzachi, "Upon One Bank and Shoal of Time: Literature, Nihilism, and Moral Philosophy"		●			*

Existence. Five articles in this sample claimed the existence of historical contact between peoples, textual coherence, textual parallels, a thematic commonality, and human effort. Two focused primarily on the stasis of existence. The focus of White's "The Latin Men: The Norman Sources of the Scandinavian Kings' Sagas" is the establishment of evidence of "the likelihood of continued contact between Scandinavian travelers to the Continent and the inhabitants of Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries" (p. 169). This argument concerning existence is called for because, according to White, "to date scholarship concerning the origin and development of the kings' sagas has tended to regard them as being the sole product of native Scandinavian literary and historical traditions stemming from the now lost Icelandic histories.… We should however, not forget the possibility that there may have been external influences on the kings' sagas as well" (p. 169). Thus the identification

of a gap in current scholarly discourse leads White to appeal to support a claim for the existence of this cultural contact with textual evidence. Rather unique to this article in the sample is its emphasis on the strength and reliability of its textual evidence in phrases such as "a hard piece of evidence" (p. 165), "corroborated" (p. 169), "could easily have been," "it is very likely," and "it is certainly possible that" (p. 164). In this vein, much of White's article consists of long quotations exemplifying, often without interspersed commentary, a "common stock of narrative material found in Norman and Scandinavia histories" (p. 157). The second article that rests at the existence stasis is Hayton's "'Many privy thinges wimpled and folde': Governance and Mutual Obligation in Usk's *Testament of Love*." Hayton similarly prefaces her argument by identifying a gap in previous criticism: "In this essay, I would like to offer a corrective to much of the criticism on the Testament, arguing that we can locate coherent meaning and structure in the text by identifying a hermeneutics of desire which comments upon Ricardian politics as much as it tries to construct an image of Usk as a faithful citizen" (p. 24).

The remaining three articles which deal with issues of existence progress from there to "higher" stases. Shoulson's "The Embrace of the Fig Tree: Sexuality and Creativity in Midrash and Milton" again starts with an evaluation of previous scholarship, then points to the existence of "parallel textual-sexual histories" in Midrash and *Paradise Lost* that are "in and of themselves noteworthy" (p. 895). But, according to Shoulson, "what makes them of even greater interest is that they suggest a very different reading of the presence of Hebraic and rabbinic influences on the seventeenth-

century English poet than is usually offered" (p. 895). Thus Shoulson moves his argument from presenting evidence of parallels between Milton and rabbinic texts to defining how an awareness of these parallels re-categorizes readings of *Paradise Lost* and the rabbinic texts as "dynamic, dialogic texts" (p. 875). Likewise, May's "Memorials to Modernity: Postcolonial Pilgrimage in Naipaul and Rushdie" seeks to establish the prior existence in the work of "important postcolonial novelists" of attention to the new topic of interest amongst postcolonial scholars, "past commonality" (p. 241). Using only V.S. Naipaul's *Area of Darkness* and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* as evidence, May then moves his argument towards defining "the elements of the new idiom of commonality that we postcolonial critics and theorists now seek"(p. 242). Lastly, Mazzola's "Brother's Keepers and Philip's Siblings: The Poetics of the Sidney Family" progresses from the stasis of existence to evaluation and cause, arguing first that in the poetry of Philip's siblings Robert and Mary is "an effort to quell Philip's image's ideological faults, as well as a means to comprehend their brother's doubts through the unveiling of more stable or coherent worlds" (p. 534). The establishment of these efforts with textual evidence allows Mazzola to then argue why Philip is known as the greater poet, and why and how Robert and Mary—as well as families in general—keep secrets and tell stories about themselves.

Definition. Definitional claims are by far the most predominant stasis issue argued in this sample. Eighty-six percent of the arguments in the sample addressed questions of definition. Categorizing and characterizing were central tasks in this sample.

Articles such as Schaub's "Queen of the Air or Constitutional Monarch?: Idealism, Irony, and Narrative Power in *Miss Marjoribanks*" and Staten's "Is *Middlemarch* Ahistorical?" argue answers to the definitional questions their titles pose. The question Schaub's addresses is restated in her opening as "Twentieth-century readers of Margaret Oliphant's fiction have been trenchantly divided about her politics. Was she a feminist or not?" (p. 195), which Schaub answers with an argument for a third alternative: Oliphant is an "anti-idealist." Similarly, Staten positions himself as entering a recent critical debate with his title question, which he answers in the negative.

The location of controversy at this stasis appears in articles that vary widely in argumentative styles. Gilbert's "Widow," for instance, begins with over five pages of autobiographical narrative, a rhetorical strategy of confessionalism that Williams (1999) sees as a growing literary critical trend during the 1990s, but is ultimately a definitional argument exploring what it means, culturally, to be a widow. On the other end of the stylistic spectrum, an article positioned much more firmly in the long philological tradition, Nagy's "Defining English: Authenticity and Standardization in Seventeenth-Century Dictionaries," also primarily investigates a definitional question, whether 17th-century dictionaries are prescriptive or descriptive.

Articles at this stasis often took the form of comparisons, as Fahnestock and Secor also found. Lynch's "'The ground-work of stile': Johnson on the History of the Language" compares statements on the purity and history of language made by Samuel Johnson and his contemporaries with similar statements made by their precursors to

characterize a theme of "rise and fall" in histories of language as anything but new from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth.

Fahnestock and Secor's characterization of this stasis as predominant and pervasive in this field is upheld by this examination of more recent literary criticism.

Evaluation. As we saw in Mazzola's celebration of Philip Sidney's greatness, arguments focused on other stases many times praise the authors and texts that are their subjects. However, such encomiums were rare in this sample. Though Albrecht's "Saying Yes and Saying No: Individualist Ethics in Ellison, Burke, and Emerson" engages the definitional stasis in its characterization of the parody of Emerson in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* as "best read… as a dual gesture of critique and affiliation" (p. 47), his argument is one of the few in the sample that overtly celebrates an author's achievement and seeks to fix him more firmly in the literary canon. Albrecht's negative evaluation is levied at other critics who have failed to appreciate the full complexity of Ellison's treatment of Emerson in *Invisible Man*. Similarly, though more understanding of Mailer's detractors, McCann's "The Imperiled Republic: Norman Mailer and the Poetics of Anti-Liberalism" seeks to rehabilitate interest in its subject through definitional argument: "Ironically, though, even as Mailer's literary stature has declined in recent years, key features of his particular brand of social criticism have become commonplace aspects of contemporary thought, and that fact alone makes him a figure still worthy of consideration" (p. 296).

However, such commendations of authors and their works appeared to be more prevalent in Fahnestock and Secor's earlier sample. Instead, I found much more

frequently (in half of the articles in this sample) evaluative claims made regarding the state of scholarly discourse upon the article's literary topic. As I noted before, all the articles in the sample addressing the stasis of existence and many addressing the stasis of definition criticized the current state of scholarship on their topic as a means to establish argumentative exigency. Repeatedly, the critics who worked on the topics before the writers in this sample were said to have overlooked and oversimplified, and their criticism needed amendment, extension, or correction. Richardson's "The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy" calls attention to a critically neglected author (Richardson notes there had been only one preceding scholarly study of Grand's work) as well as argues for a revision of the recent and developing critical thought on New Woman novels this attention should bring. Her attention to an author's work to correct current critical thought is characteristic of the evaluations of previous scholarship that appear throughout this sample of articles:

> Silenced for the best part of the twentieth century, New Woman voices have formed the focus of increasing scholarly debate in the last two decades, a focus which has seen them acclaimed by many as unadulteratedly feminist. Many of these critical appraisals, characterized by current anti-essentialist thinking, present New Woman texts as aesthetically and politically radical. In what follows I will locate the New Woman more securely in her historical context, arguing in particular that she had her own agenda of eugenic feminism, the central goal of which was the construction of civic motherhood. (pp. 227-8).

Thus it appears the practice of the discourse community has shifted from an isolated focus on literary texts towards greater attention to building on the community's knowledge of literary texts and history. Richardson's attention to an author who upheld far from praise-worthy eugenic beliefs helps clarify this shift. Richardson calls for greater attention to authors such as Grand not because they are literary exemplars, but because they help critics achieve a more accurate, if less glorious, sense of history and feminism.

Cause. Though causal claims were made in this sample, they were seldom supported by the bulk of the reasoning and evidence these arguments presented. For the most part the claims made at the stases of existence, definition, and evaluation were supported with reasons and textual evidence, although for many articles I would concur with Fahnestock and Secor's observations that "the quantity and typicality of the evidence were rarely defended" (1991, p. 82) and the criteria for evaluation seldom fully articulated. Yet the causal claims put forth were frequently notable for their lack of further argumentation. For instance, as McCann compares Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* with a more recent memoir recounting the same events, Mikal Gilmore's *Shot in the Heart*, he notes, "The ultimate irony of the contrast between *The Executioner's Song* and *Shot in the Heart*, it thus turns out, is that the former's distrust of liberal institutions helped prepare the ground for the latter's intensely private obsession with patrimony and heritage" (p. 298). Yet the causal linkage this statement suggests is not further supported as McCann focuses on defining "the coherent political vision" that lies "beneath Mailer's various literary experiments, his ramblings and

ravings" (p. 307). Several other articles traversed this line between causal claims and definitional arguments more substantially. Gigante's "Forming Desire: On the Eponymous *In Memoriam* Stanza," for instance, seeks "to understand how the *In Memoriam* stanza first emerged from poetic syntax available during the Renaissance" (p. 483) by asking "what is it about this particular poem that demands a different word pattern?" (p. 484). This search for the "parent" (p. 491) forms from which this stanza form emerged, though, more often operates at the stasis of definition by actually answering "what is this stanza form?" with characterizations such as "'legless' Petrarchan quatrains" (p. 494). Similarly, Gigante's "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating" seeks the causal origins of a definition through definition: "For as this essay will show, Milton complicates the category of physiological taste in such a manner as to form the ground for the possibility of aesthetic taste, which emerges as a distinct discourse in the early years of the eighteenth century" (p. 88). Gilbert's "'Rats' Alley': The Great War, Modernism, and the (Anti)Pastoral Elegy" claims she made her definitional argument in a previous article and that this current article examines "how and why" antipastoral elegies replaced the pastoral circa World War I and how "the relatively hopeful view of death on which the pastoral elegy is founded metamorphose[d] into our more nihilistic, indeed, monstrous visions" (p. 183). Yet this article, too, more often operates at the stasis of definition, making its argument through categorical claims such as identifying poetic gestures as being "in the strictest sense *testimonial* gestures, gestures consonant with the concept of testimony as it has lately been defined by Shoshana Felman" (p. 188). Pullman (1994) offers an explanation for the infrequency

of causal arguments in literary interpretation. He claims that causal arguments are "out of fashion these days" because "direct lineage between ages and cultures is more likely to be objectionable now than when people believed that there was essentially one culture and that it descended in a straight line" (p. 382). Whether this shift also explains their infrequency in Fahnestock and Secor's sample cannot be ascertained; if it does not, Pullman's explanation may be insufficient.

Proposal. The four articles making explicit proposal claims all urge their audience to read the texts that are their subjects in a new way, an invitation that would seem to be the foundation for all literary criticism. Burton's "Rereading Faulkner: Authority, Criticism, and *The Sound and the Fury*" thoroughly criticizes Faulkner scholarship for its lack of theoretical sophistication, a negative evaluation which leads her to forward a proposal: "Bakhtin's understanding of novelistic discourse suggests that critical discussion of *The Sound and the Fury* must approach Faulkner's later narratives about this narrative much more skeptically than in the past" (p. 613). Devoting most of her attention to what she sees as a much needed critique, Burton then specifically points to the "complicated relationship" (p. 625) Faulkner's Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury* has with the novel itself as the needed future site of study. Just as Burton asks Faulkner critics to brush up on their Foucault and Bakhtin, Zamir's "Upon One Bank and Shoal of Time: Literature, Nihilism, and Moral Philosophy" asks its readers to form a new understanding of the links between philosophy and literature in light of current theory. Specifically, Zamir uses *Macbeth* to illustrate how a richer understanding of a philosophical position such as nihilism "when it plausibly emerges

in a life" (p. 530) can be gained from literature. This largely definitional argument is then used as illustrative in a proposal argument striving to rehabilitate ethical criticism:

> … some of the criticism that has been very recently leveled at the ideal of ethical criticism can be avoided through endorsing a different understanding from the one we so far have regarding the links between philosophy and literature. More specifically, instead of regarding literature's unique contributions to moral understanding as stemming from a greater ability to focus on the particular, we should look for literature's nonparaphrasable contributions in terms of different qualitative structuralizations of knowledge. Changing the focus from ethics to epistemology would enable proponents of the ethical approach to maintain the ideal of nonreducible ethical insight that some literary works yield, and yet avoid the risk of endorsing a pedantic, pre-Formalist conception of literature. (pp. 530-1)

Perloff's argument in "Language Poetry and the Lyric Subject: Ron Silliman's Albany, Susan Howe's Buffalo" makes a proposal in this same vein. Starting from a criticism of Language poetry and poststructuralism for their lack of an adequate critical vocabulary for dealing with the unique differences among poets' work, Perloff proposes a new alternative to the problematic concepts of "voice" and "style": "Perhaps a more accurate term to refer to the mark of difference that separates one identity from another, no matter how fully the two share a particular group aesthetic, is the word *signature*"

(pp. 412- 413). Thus her article, in its treatment of this term, operates largely at the definitional stasis, but it begins and ends with strongly stated proposal assertions.

Although each article can be seen as an invitation to read in a new way, Elder's "The Poetry of Experience" stands out for its uniquely pedagogical proposal. He begins by celebrating the development of ecocriticism but faults the field for leaving "out something crucial…the role of natural experience in the study of literature" (p. 650). The central point of Elder's piece is his claim that "to be alert and receptive readers of [Robert Frost's] poetry, we too need to venture out under the sky, into rain and sun" (p. 658). Though this claim rings of eighteenth-century Scottish belletrism, Elder grounds it in a current disciplinary exigence:

> An emphasis upon experience may protect against one danger in ecocriticism's emergence as a form of literary theory. Contemporary theory has certainly proven to be a valuable source of insight into literature. But it can also suffer from jargon, self-referentially, and a narrow professionalism that are the opposite of nature writing's original liberating impulse. This is why scholars and teachers must now undertake a determined, unceasing effort to ground criticism and teaching alike in the natural experience from which so much of the world's great literature has emerged…. Carrying out reading, reflection, teaching, and writing out under the sky can remind us that this scholarly adventure is not about competing with other academic specialties and

> critical schools. Our central purpose should rather be renewing literary education and enhancing the vitality of our culture. (pp. 650-1)

Offered as evidence of support, Elder narrates a morning's scything lesson that further illuminates Frost's "Mowing" for him. "One implication," states Elder of his experience, "may be that those of us who teach writers as sensitive to the living landscape as Frost should systematically integrate fieldtrips and other outdoor experiences into our courses" (p. 656).

However anomalous Elder's approach to the proposal stasis may be, Fahnestock and Secor's observation concerning the implicit function of the proposal stasis in all literary criticism in terms of canon formation (a purpose they did not see explicitly articulated) ought to be extended to include not only *what* is taught but *how* as well. Though Elder's is the only in this sample to discuss pedagogical practice, his article highlights that what seems most at stake in these arguments is how literature is discussed and treated among the colleagues who are audience members and also at the site these colleagues enter several times a week to discuss and treat literature: the classroom. This sample contains treatments of long-time residents of the canon—Shakespeare, Milton, Sidney, Faulkner, Frost—and treatments of those the critics present as deserved newcomers—Lanyer, Grand, Mailer, Le Sueur. But it seems somehow as false to suggest that these authors and others such as Naipaul and Rushdie or Howe and Silliman continue to require arguments to be let into the canon as it does to suggest that Shakespeare is in peril of being dropped from the great list. It is now common knowledge among academic literary critics that the boundaries of what has

been demarcated "literature," much less "great literature," have fluctuated from the moment they were drawn (Graff, 1987; Ross, 1996; Scholes, 1985, 1998; Shumway, 1994; Tompkins, 1985; Warner, 1990; R. Williams, 1977; Eagleton, 1983). The ascendancy of a "cultural studies" approach to the discipline's object of study only underscores that what is really at stake in current literary criticism is much less what works are on undergraduate and graduate syllabi and much more the way they are taught. It is in these ways of interpretation, the understood focus of literary pedagogy, where lively controversies exist at the definitional and evaluative stases. Additionally, the explicit arguments concerning methods of interpretation in the articles by Burton, Zamir, and Perloff highlight the difficulty of demarcating boundaries between literary criticism and literary theory in the current discourse of this field. In the examination of special *topoi* that follows, I will seek aspects of methodologies of interpretation these widely diverse approaches to literature share.

In conclusion of this analysis of stases, it is worth noting both the common practices across the sample as well as points of divergence. Definitional propositions predominated, as they appeared to do in Fahnestock and Secor's sample. Interestingly, with the exception of Elder's unusual article in *NLH*, the few articles which did not engage the definitional stasis all appeared in older, and thus perhaps less "cutting edge" journals (*Studies in Philology*, *Criticism*, and *JEGP*), though certainly a significant number of articles in such journals did deal with definitional issues. Likewise, the few articles which addressed the existence stasis were all from such older journals as well

(*Studies in Philology*, *ELH*, *Criticism*, and *JEGP*) as were also the few articles which argued for positive evaluations of literary works (*PMLA*, *ELH*, and *Criticism*). Evaluations of the state of scholarly discourse and gestures towards fuller causal and proposal arguments cut across the older journals in the sample and journals such as *diacritics*, *Critical Inquiry*, and *NLH*. Though the sample size makes such observations necessarily tentative, there appears to be a trend in the field's discourse towards engaging in arguments that critique and build upon previous discourse while remaining rooted in addressing categorical issues.

Special Topoi invoked: Because Fahnestock and Secor's stasis analysis found "that literary arguments often do not make explicit certain structurally predictable elements" and thus "may seem flawed when viewed from a distance and by a field-independent standard" (1991, p. 84) , they turned their attention next to uncovering the special *topoi* that could account for the persuasiveness of these arguments in the context of their field. Though I question the possibility of a "field-independent standard," my repetition of their stasis analysis with a recent sample also prompts further analysis to investigate the methods of reading, interpretation, and argumentation that appear to be what is ultimately at stake in literary criticism. An analysis of special *topoi* searches for what methods the sample tacitly shares, or in other words, what specific assumptions about effective argumentation these diverse pieces of literary criticism hold in common. Special *topoi* are thus abstract enough to allow for a diversity of approaches and

specific enough to account for the commonalties (beyond object of study) that hold a discipline together.

Table 2.3 presents the results of my analysis of special *topoi*, indicating both major and minor *topoi* invoked. All five of the special *topoi* Fahnestock and Secor first categorized were present in the more recent sample as well. And with the exception of the *contemptus mundi topos*, their use was widespread. Twenty-five (89%) of the articles in the sample applied the appearance/reality *topos*, twenty-five (89%) the paradigm *topos*, twenty (71%) the ubiquity *topos*, fifteen (54%) the paradox *topos*, and six (21%) the *contemptus mundi topos*. In what follows I will demonstrate several of the ways in which the application of these special *topoi* remains consistent with Fahnestock and Secor's earlier analysis, suggesting they can serve a disciplinarily conservative function. But I will also present the ways in which these *topoi* have apparently evolved with the discipline and spawned two subvariants of the appearance/reality and paradigm *topoi*, the mistaken critic and the context *topoi*, and a new *topos* which subverts *contemptus mundi*, the social justice *topos*.

TABLE 2.3: Special *Topoi* Invoked in Each Article in the Sample. An ● indicates a significant, primary application of the *topos* while a * indicates a minor, passing, or secondary application of the *topos*.

	Special Topos					
Author and Title of Article	**Appearance /reality**	**Paradigm**	**Ubiquity**	**Paradox**	**Contemptus Mundi**	**Social Justice**
Albrecht, James M., "Saying Yes and Saying No: Individualist Ethics in Ellison, Burke, and Emerson"	* ● Mistaken Critic	● Context	●	●		●
Berger, Courtney, "When Bad Things Happen to Bad People: Liability and Individual Consciousness in Adam Bede and Silas Marner"	● ● Mistaken Critic	● ● Context	●			*
Burton, Stacy, "Rereading Faulkner: Authority, Criticism, and The Sound and the Fury"		●	●	*		●
DiPasquale, Theresa M., "Woman's Desire for Man in Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum"	● ● Mistaken Critic					*
Elder, John, "The Poetry of Experience"	● Mistaken Critic	* Context			●	*
Gallagher, Catherine, "A History of the Precedent: Rhetorics of Legitimation in Women's Writing"	● Mistaken Critic	● ● Context		*	●	●
Gamer, Michael, "Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama"	●	● ● Context	●			
Geyh, Paula E., "Triptych Time: The Experiential Historiography of Meridel Le Sueur's The Dread Road"	●	●				●
Gigante, Denise, "Forming Desire: On the Eponymous In Memoriam Stanza"	● * Mistaken Critic	● Context		*		*

	Special Topos					
Author and Title of Article	**Appearance /reality**	**Paradigm**	**Ubiquity**	**Paradox**	**Contemptus Mundi**	**Social Justice**
Gigante, Denise, "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating"	● * Mistaken Critic	* ● Micro-paradigm ● Context	●			
Gilbert, Sandra M., "Widow"		● Micro-paradigm	●			
Gilbert, Susan M., "'Rats' Alley': The Great War, Modernism, and the (Anti)Pastoral Elegy"	●	● ● Micro-paradigm ● Context	●	*	*	
Hayton, Heather Richardson, "'Many privy thinges wimpled and folde': Governance and Mutual Obligation in Usk's Testament of Love"	● ● Mistaken Critic	● Context	●	●		*
Lynch, Jack, "The ground-work of stile": Johnson on the History of the Language"	*	● Context	●			
Matz, Robert, "Slander, Renaissance Discourses of Sodomy, and Othello"		●	●	●		*
May, Brian, "Memorials to Modernity: Postcolonial Pilgrimage in Naipul and Rushdie"	● Mistaken Critic	●	●	*	*	●
Mazzola, Elizabeth, "Brothers' Keepers and Philip's Siblings: The Poetics of the Sidney Family"	●	● Context	●	*		*
McCann, Sean, "The Imperiled Republic: Norman Mailer and the Poetics of Anti-liberalism"	●		●	●	●	*
McHugh, Susan, "Marrying My Bitch: J.R. Ackerley's Pack Sexualities"	● ● Mistaken Critic	● ● Micro-paradigm		*		●

	Special Topos					
Author and Title of Article	**Appearance /reality**	**Paradigm**	**Ubiquity**	**Paradox**	**Contemptus Mundi**	**Social Justice**
Nagy, Andrea R,. "Defining English: Authenticity and Standardization in Seventeenth-Century Dictionaries"	● Mistaken Critic	● Context	●			*
Perloff, Marjorie, "Language Poetry and the Lyric Subject: Ron Silliman's Albany, Susan Howe's Buffalo"	● ● Mistaken Critic		●	*		
Richardson, Angelique, "The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy"	● ● Mistaken Critic	● Context				●
Schaub, Melissa, "Queen of the Air or Constitutional Monarch?: Idealism, Irony, and Narrative Power in Miss Marjoribanks"	● ● Mistaken Critic	● ● Context	●	*		●
Shoulson, Jeffrey S., "The Embrace of the Fig Tree: Sexuality and Creativity in Midrash and in Milton"	● ● Mistaken Critic	* ● Context	●			
Staten, Henry, "Is Middlemarch Ahistorical?"	● ● Mistaken Critic	●	●		●	●
Theisen, Bianca, "The Four Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke"	●	●		●		
White, Paul A., "The Latin Men: The Norman Sources of the Scandinavian Kings' Sagas"	● Mistaken Critic	● Context	●			
Zamir, Tzachi, "Upon One Bank and Shoal of Time: Literature, Nihilism, and Moral Philosophy"	● * Mistaken Critic	* ● Micro-paradigm	●	●		●

Appearance/reality. My analysis lends support to Fahnestock and Secor's suggestion that "the appearance/reality *topos* is the fundamental assumption of criticism, since without it there would be no impetus to analyze or interpret literature" (1991, p. 85). For McCann, a coherent political vision lies beneath Mailer's "ramblings and ravings" (p. 307); for Albrecht, a subway setting in the *Invisible Man* "symbolizes the narrator's underground self-awareness and Norton's blindness" (p. 58); in Berger's reading of *Silas Marner*, "Nancy's wholesale rejection of adoption and her coextensive inability to recognize the benefits of cultivating new beliefs represent a broader repudiation of society" (p. 324); while in McHugh's reading of J.R. Ackerley's work, a "mongrel is not simply a metaphor… but more importantly a secret sharer of familiar illegitimacy" (p. 27). Verbs such as "symbolize," "decode," "seems," "masks," and "underlies," were frequent clear indicators of the application of this *topos*. Gigante's work on Tennyson's *In Memoriam* stanza provides a spatial metaphor for its methodology which would make it at home among Fahnestock and Secor's earlier sample:

> A radical genealogy of the stanza will show how the poem's formal devices work to incorporate (and disguise) its "vague desire" in specific "matter-moulded forms of speech" (LXXX, 1. 1; XCV, 1.46). Since the poem admits its own refusal to draw the "deepest measure"… from the chords or to make explicit its own hidden truths, an investigation into the one formal unit so distinctive to the poem that it bears its name--and is

> virtually unique in the history of English prosody--can provide a covert route to those buried chords. (p. 481)

However, I occasionally observed a tension between the application of the appearance/reality *topos* and a desire to move beyond the seemingly simple polarization its deliberate use seems to suggest. For instance, Perloff declares that "Postmodernism no longer recognizes such 'depth models' as inside/outside, essence/appearance, latent/manifest, authenticity/inauthenticity, signifier/signified, or depth/surface" (p. 408) in the same article in which she uncovers buried meaning in the title of Silliman's poem that "is called *Under Albany--under*, no doubt, because the poet now tries to get inside, behind, and under his earlier statements so as to make some sense of the psychological and social trajectory" (p. 421). Zamir, too, describes a simpler, earlier appearance/reality opposition present in *Hamlet* but surpassed in *Macbeth* because the location of the opposition has shifted from an explicit formulation in the literary text to an implicit clue that the critic uncovers. For instance, Zamir's reading unlocks "a second, deeper meaning" (p. 544) buried under Lady Macbeth's use of simile in her instructions to Macbeth:

> Lady Macbeth employs the figure as part of what seems to be a simple opposition between appearance and reality that structures her lines ("… look like th'innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't"). However…. The more one reads the play the more one suspects that she deeply misreads her husband and that these lines are, rather, a projection of her own submerged morality. (pp. 533-4)

The tension these critics express seems to suggest that this *topos* has evolved over time and that its use in the critical enterprise requires some defense.[4] Deconstructionism has drawn attention to the easy poles of appearance/reality embedded in any text, and New Historicism has encouraged the location of reality in still other texts, in context and not, as Fahnestock and Secor observed in their sample, in the construction of the critic's imagination. These theoretical developments have changed the ends to which the appearance/reality *topos* is applied and will be discussed further. However, at its most basic definition as a perception of two entities, one on the surface and one deep, the appearance/reality *topos* continues to be the most prevalent *topos*.

Mistaken critic. In eighteen of the articles invoking the appearance/reality *topos*, 64% of the total number of articles in the sample, I observed a permutation of the appearance/reality *topos* that ultimately called for its own label. Its distinctive features, such as its location of the dualism not in the literary text but in the critical discourse surrounding the text and its affinity with the evaluative stasis, warrant a new label for a special *topos* of literary criticism that either Fahnestock and Secor did not note or developed since their study.

Like all applications of the appearance/reality *topos*, the mistaken critic *topos* is grounded in the spatial metaphor of surface and depth; however, its most frequent manifestation is as a metaphor of perception, particularly sight. Repeatedly, previous critics who treated the literary work under discussion didn't see some aspect of the text correctly. Richardson's reading of Sarah Grand's promotion of race-perpetuation

[4] This tension is echoed by the professor of my observational study in chapter 3.

through women's traditional domestic roles is offered because so many other critics have presented Grand as a radical feminist: "Grand's views, superficially resembling those of radical feminists, were in fact quite different" (p. 238). Though a "perceived contradiction" between Grand's portrayal of unhappy marriages and her insistence on indissoluble marriage vows "has led to a recent concentration by critics on the more radical aspects of her fiction" (p. 248), Richardson argues against current critical perception to locate Grand's views as distinctly ultraconservative. Like many of the other thirteen critics in this sample who employed this *topos*, Richardson then names and corrects the previous mistaken critics. For instance, one of Grand's character's assertions that she is "going to write for women, not for men" that is "usually taken as a radical feminist statement (Mitchell v; Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 66), may be seen to signal this intention to educate women eugenically through the novel" (p. 241). Similarly, the "light" Richardson's argument sheds should encourage readers to return to and refine the work of previous critics: "in this light, Elaine Showalter's argument that New Woman novels are characterized by the rejection of self-sacrifice (*Literature* 31, 181) requires amendment. Women were not to sacrifice themselves to unsuitable men, but to the community at large" (p. 230).

Frequently the perception metaphor employed in the service of the mistaken critic *topos* indicated not a faulty perception but an entire lack of perception of some key aspect of the literary text. Hayton, for instance, attributes "part of past critical neglect endured" by Usk's *Testament of Love* "to the text's perceived lack of structure" (p. 23). Similarly Berger notes that, despite its centrality to plot, "Eliot's credo of

personal responsibility has generally received only glancing critical attention" (p. 307). Using the vocabulary of appearance and offering a corrective, Berger explains that

> this apparent lack of interest in debating Eliot's criteria for a liable act (or for retribution) seems to derive from the ease with which the novel makes and unmakes its guilty parties. That is, because Eliot presents the reader with a seemingly self-contained and coherent account of the novel's own methods for doling out rewards and punishments, the novel itself licenses an unproblematized critical attitude towards the function of liability. (p. 307)

Clearly one of the functions the mistaken critic *topos* serves is to provide exigency for a critic's new work on a previously thoroughly discussed, dismissed, or unknown text. Frequently this *topos* was invoked in the early paragraphs of an article where it likely served the "establishing a niche" function of the second "move" in the "create a research space" model Swales (1990) constructed from his study of research article introductions. However, corrections of cited critics were also likely to appear throughout these articles, suggesting they served as much an ongoing dialogic function with the disciplinary discourse community as a counter-claim or gap function. In this way, it appears members of this discipline build new knowledge by constructing an inventory of consensual knowledge and then staking strategic claims against it, as Kaufer and Geisler (1989) observed in the discipline of philosophy. In contrast, Bazerman (1981) notes of an article published in 1978 on a sonnet by Wordsworth that though the writer "criticizes a normalized reading—i.e., conventional criticism—as

inadequate to the poem… In the text of the essay no explicit mention of Wordsworth criticism is made, and in the notes the only reference to any critics are to Longinus and Kenneth Burke, both of whom discussed concepts analogous" to the critic's (p. 375). Likewise, MacDonald (1992, 1994) observed a low frequency of other critics named in the sentence subject positions of four articles by Renaissance New Historicists published between 1983 and 1987. The prevalence of the mistaken critic *topos* in the current sample may suggest a recent shift in the practice of literary scholars towards an emphasis on the epistemic and socially negotiated MacDonald (1992, 1994) observed among social scientists.[5]

Highlighting the subjectively constructed nature of this dialogic style, however, are those moments when, instead of citing other critics as the mistaken critics, a critic will name a hypothetical critic or even herself as the mistake one. Perloff, for instance, puts words in the mouth of an imagined critic she can then debunk: "Here, Howe's detractors would say, is a cryptic Language poem that denies the very possibilities of the expressivity one wants from lyric. Or does it?" (p. 426). Such a strategy was also observed by Geisler (1991) in an academic philosopher's practice of abstracting what another philosopher *might* have said. In a similar vein, Elder cites a spoken comment from an unnamed scholar that he then counters in print:

> I was incautious enough to mention to one Frost scholar that the experience of mowing had opened up new dimensions of the poem to

[5] However, it should be noted that Sosnoski (1979) observed that "each critic" in his sample of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* criticism from 1928-1977 "complains that at least one other critic *misreads* part of the text" (p. 50).

> me. His rejoinder was, "The scythe in that poem means one thing and one thing only." And of course it is true that Frost is always alert to shadows of mortality…. But the fact remains that a scythe is a tool as well as a symbol, that it was used by the poet himself in hand mowing, and that its sound and technique informs both the music and the emotional tone of the poem. (p. 654)

Perhaps rhetorically more comfortable with his chosen "niche," May includes himself as one of the previously mistaken critics: "Indeed, we have been so ready to see Rushdie celebrate melange and mixed-ness that we have usually failed to note Rushdie's own mixed feelings in the fiction" (p. 259). And Gallagher's opening account in "A History of the Precedent: Rhetorics of Legitimation in Women's Writing" of her own early disappointment as a feminist academic with early modern women writers not only places her work in the growing trend of confessionalism noted by Williams (1999) but allows her audience to identify as likewise mistaken and open to discovery. Though there is a range of possible identities for the mistaken critic, from well-documented citations of other scholar's statements to hypothetical critics to the self, this strategy recurred enough through the sample to warrant its own classification.

Paradigm. The strategy of elucidating a literary text by applying a conceptual template that Fahnestock and Secor noted as recurrent in their sample appeared in 89% of this sample as well. To be sure, some articles more fully explicated the macroparadigmatic lenses through which they viewed a text than others. In "The Four

Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke," Theisen takes an uncharacteristic (for this sample) amount of space, sixteen pages, to explicate Wolfgang Iser's theory of reading and compare it to other theories. After this set up, Theisen then examines, in six pages, Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* in light of Iser's theory. Clearly the emphasis in Theisen's article is placed more on the macrostructural frame than its application to a merely "exemplify[ing]" (p. 121) text. Much more frequent in the sample are instances of macroparadigmatic "name-dropping" in which theorists or theories are alluded to, with an assumption of familiarity with them or at least their significance on the part of the audience, and then directly applied to the text under discussion. Several critics were quite explicit about this maneuver. In "Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama" Gamer states his macroparadigmatic intentions early on; departing from the macroparadigms applied by previous scholars, Gamer "aims to complicate this notion of the Romantic author by viewing it through the lenses of Gothic drama and fiction rather than that of poetry and copyright" (p. 833). Likewise, Staten acknowledges his use of macroparadigm by stating that "all the major characters can be mapped onto a system of social relations that manifests the continued dominance and stifling effect of the class ideology derived from the aristocracy" (p. 992), as does Gallagher when she states that Max Weber's scheme of legitimate authority "is the skeleton of this essay" (p. 311). With somewhat less deliberate attention to the application of this special *topos*, Matz locates his work as contributing to renaissance queer theory and then cites and applies the work of Robert Bray, Homi Bhabha, Eve Kosovsky Sedgewick, and Stephen

Greenblatt. In similar ways, Shoulson uses Lacan; Schaub uses Nancy Armstrong; Burton uses Foucault and Bakhtin; Zamir and Gilbert use Freud; Berger uses Marx; Gigante uses Derrida; May uses Bhabha, Lyotard, Rorty, and Wayne Booth; Geyh uses de Certeau, Jameson, Lyotard, Marx, and Vico; and McHugh uses Michael Warner, Lauren Berlant, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Judith Roof, to list a few. Frequently this application of the macroparadigm *topos* "in passing" is not supported with substantial amounts of textual evidence in an attempt to validate the match, but instead is presented as a helpful category for readers to reference, a touchstone, in other words, to suggest the theoretical assumptions underpinning the critic's argument. Of course, it seems likely that in literary studies the citation of theory and previous scholarship is as it is in Howard Becker's (1986) description of the practices in sociology: application of macroparadigms may be less than a purely free choice because of the expectations of audience members, particularly those more highly ranked in the discourse community's hierarchy, to ground one's contribution in what has been previously said on the topic. Indeed, as Becker points out, a scholar's selection of a topic has already likely committed or obligated her to (and was likely already influenced by) certain theoretical frameworks.

Less frequently, instead of providing a mere reference, a critic would challenge the validity of the chosen macroparadigm by testing its full applicability to the chosen literary text. May exemplifies this strategy in his claim that *The Satanic Verses* and *Area of Darkness* conflict with certain aspects of current postcolonial theory: "The end of Rushdie's novel thus resists closure: the unambiguous, clean parting with the West

expected by many postcolonial critics. Indeed, neither of these two postcolonial novels bears out in precise detail the patterns blueprinted by the large body of established postcolonial theorists, at least where questions of modern individuality are involved" (pp. 260-1). However, May ultimately concludes that Bhabha's recent works of theory make an excellent fit with Rushdie and Naipaul's texts. Geyh, too, points to incongruities between a macroparadigm she applies and the literary text she examines while maintaining the usefulness of the macroparadigm: "Although Le Sueur's protagonists move through the space of the Southwest on a bus with a predetermined route, and so their travels apparently lack the choice and volition present in de Certeau's conceptual framework, it still seems to provide a productive way in which to conceptualize the actions of the two women on their journey" (p. 89). This work of testing and refining conceptual frameworks we see in May and Geyh's arguments suggests that the objectives of literary criticism can be to contribute to the discourse on theory as well as on textual interpretation. In light of the objectives for which the proposal stasis was addressed in this sample, we can see the macroparadigm *topos* as a method for supporting arguments on how to read.

Five articles applied the paradigm *topos* microstructurally by finding and extending "a small structural unit in the text, which becomes the center of ever-larger concentric applications" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 89). Because Fahnestock and Secor did not indicate the prevalence of this form of the *topos* in their sample, it is impossible to compare with certainty, though this finding may indicate a decrease in the prevalence of the micropardigm version of this *topos*. Indeed, Fahnestock and Secor's

observation that the strategy of claiming a text "is really about art itself" (p. 89) may warrant its own *topos* is not born out by this sample. Coming closest is Zamir's "Upon One Bank and Shoal of Time: Literature, Nihilism, and Moral Philosophy" in which he claims that texts are about life: "Like all works of art, literary texts are invitations to a specific structuralization of experience" (p. 545). In particular, Zamir moves from a claim that "through the characterization of Macbeth, Shakespeare conveys a general insight into nihilism" (p. 540) to a claim that the experience of reading literature can inform our more general understanding of ethical philosophy and belief formation. Stepping from evidence culled from her own experience, anthropological texts, and poetry in "Widow," Gilbert invokes this version of the paradigm *topos* in a tentative, broad claim concerning woman's power in general: "Perhaps onlookers shiver at the widow's uncanny access to the to the other world in the same way that culture shudders, more generally, at woman's power, as if woman's power to give birth must be matched by an equal power to take the gift of life back into herself" (p. 576). Working within a smaller range of source materials, A. R. Ackerley's two memoirs and one novel, McHugh traces "a pattern" (p. 22) which elucidates a larger microparadigm that sheds light not only on how best to read each of Ackerley's individual texts but on the condition of being a gay man in England during the 1960s: "Illicit sex between men is a common thread through Ackerley's writing, and the strain, anxiety, and wariness characterizing these precarious intimacies often says more about their larger cultural and historical context than about the 'friendly hand' recording them" (p. 21). If indeed a shift away from locating the origins of patterns in literary texts has occurred, perhaps

it can be explained by the decreasing validity of New Critical approaches that treat texts and a critic's response to them in isolation and an increasing perception of the discipline as a community of researchers interested in explaining texts with previously constructed social theories and in testing social theories with texts.

Context. Gilbert and McHugh's interest in connecting the texts they examine to cultural and historical contexts, however, is far more of a commonplace in this sample than reflexive commentary on art, so much so that I found it necessary to supplement Fahnestock and Secor's classifications with an additional special *topos*, the context *topos*. Theorists whose names were dropped in macroparadigm invocations were more frequently advocates of bringing contextual historical details to bear on the interpretation of literary texts, and appearance/reality distinctions were more likely to be unlocked by elucidation of historical and cultural context. Sixteen of the articles, 57% of the sample, invoked this specific form of the paradigm *topos* by presuming, frequently without stated justification, that historically contextual details should be brought to bear upon textual interpretation. In contrast, Fahnestock and Secor mention only one example (though perhaps representative) in their sample of this specific type of appearance/reality maneuver (p. 86) while observing that more often the critics in their sample point out allusions without arguing the authors were familiar with the allusions' source texts and do not "distinguish between finding and constructing a reality, or worry over the possible difference" (p. 85). Yet in the more recent sample I observed several applications of the mistaken critic *topos* in which previous critics are faulted for their anachronisms. Nagy faults previous scholars investigating whether

17th-century dictionaries are prescriptive or descriptive for asking questions that are "to some extent anachronistic" (p. 442). Recall also that Richardson's reappraisal of Sarah Grand as less a radical feminist than other critics have recently claimed likewise faults these critics for their anachronism. Richardson credits a "perceived contradiction" in Grand's portrayal of unhappy marriages and her "insistence that indissoluble marriage vows were unquestionably in the best interest of race-perpetuation" as "the result of ideas imported from our own fin-de-siecle to that of the nineteenth century…. It is only by historicizing Grand's novels that we can guard against interpretations which would have baffled and alarmed their maker" (p. 248). Indeed, frequently great care was taken to document connections between the allusions these critics claimed they saw in literary texts and the authors of the literary texts. For instance, Albrecht justifies his paradigmatic application of Kenneth Burke's work to Ralph Ellison's by stating that these two writers knew each other and admired each other's work. And though Hayton is less sure of Usk's familiarity with Aristotle's *Ethics*, it is interesting to note that she does take care to point to the likelihood of this familiarity when she spots an allusion to *Ethics* in Usk's *Testament of Love*: "Although we can't be certain of Usk's primary encounter with Aristotle's *Ethics*, he does cite Aristotle by name" (p. 33). Clearly the critics in this more recent sample are worrying more over the difference between finding and constructing a reality.

But beyond greater attention to historical probability, the primary aim of several articles in this sample is to elucidate a literary text by placing it in its appropriate historical context. This application of the context *topos* works in concert with the

appearance/reality *topos* to clarify textual elements opaque to contemporary readers who lack the necessary knowledge of historical, contextual detail. "To fully engage the various levels of meaning found in the *Testament*," Hayton informs us, "it is essential that we acknowledge the highly politicized nature of certain metaphors Usk employs" (p. 24). Thus reading Usk's *Testament of Love* against the political events of Usk's London, we can read the text as Usk's original audience would have and the text's obscure elements become clear. For example, "Usk's audience could easily draw from the analogy a political statement about London's factional politics" (p. 6). Similarly, Gamer uses historical realities to argue against the textual appearances of Matthew Lewis's introduction to his drama *Castle Spectre*: "the context of composition, and Lewis's own later efforts to improve the labor conditions of slaves in Jamaica, argue that more is afoot in the above passage than the mere vanity of a fop" (p. 847). Repeatedly, these critics invoke "knowledge of context" (Mazzola, 1999, p. 526) and work to reattach a publication "so often detached from its original context" (Gilbert, 1999, p. 180). Even Elder, for all his privileging of direct experience of the natural world, ultimately turns to *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide* to understand the New England landscape as Frost would have seen it. Only Burton makes a case against using contextual materials in her objection to critics' reliance upon Faulkner's Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury*: "Even deconstructive, feminist, materialist, and other theoretically informed readings of *The Sound and the Fury* have continued to rely upon (rather than to question) the retrospective authority of William Faulkner" (p. 609). Unlike so many of the other critics in this sample who draw from authors'

correspondence, journals, and other publications to support their arguments, Burton disapproves of similar use of Faulkner's Appendix in part because of its already canonical status and in part because it, too, written seventeen years after the original publication of *The Sound and the Fury*, is anachronistic. Thus her disapproval, which at first seems to thoroughly contradict Richardson's concern that "we can guard against interpretations which would have baffled and alarmed their maker" (p. 248), does not stray too far afield from the current shared assumptions of this discourse community. Pullman's (1994) characterization of a "context" (p. 382) literary special *topos* further supports my depiction of this subvariant of the paradigm *topos*.

Ubiquity. Like the appearance/reality and paradigm *topoi*, the ubiquity *topos* as Fahnestock and Secor observed it abounds in this sample as well. Seventy-one percent of these articles point to repeated textual evidence of recurring images, words, or patterns. And as Fahnestock and Secor noted in the example they presented of this *topos*, the ubiquity *topos* is frequently invoked to support the use of another *topos* with a catalogue of compelling examples. Claims are supported with "ample" and "additional evidence" (White, 1999, p. 162) found "often" (Mazzola, 1999, p. 529), "again and again" (Mazzola, 1999, p. 530), and "at several instances" (Berger, 2000, p. 317). And as with the appearance/reality and paradigm *topoi*, critics apply this strategy to a diverse range of texts for a diverse range of ends: Zamir's tracks a "psychophilosophical pattern" (p. 541) in *Macbeth*, McCann traces the politics that "runs all through Mailer's fiction" (p. 319) and "haunts all his work" (p. 312), and Burton finds unquestioned reliance on Faulkner's supplementary materials to *The Sound*

and the Fury in "virtually all critical analyses of the novel" (p. 607). The ubiquitous nature of a textual feature can be presented as sufficient cause for investigation; Gigante introduces her piece by noting that the word "taste" appears "thirty times in Book IX of *Paradise Lost* alone" (p. 88). In its most quantitative application, Nagy tallies the number of words beginning with "m" in a selection of 17th-century English dictionaries and further tallies the number of these words that derive from Latin.

Though it may seem self-evident that literary critics should shore up as much textual evidence as they can to support their claims, a tension exists between this *topos* and warrants favoring uniqueness (see the discussions of loci of quantity and quality in Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Secor, 1984). Evidence of this tension occasionally appears in this sample. In two articles the critics assumed uniqueness as a foundational warrant for their arguments. DiPasquale values the subject of her argument because of Aemilia Lanyer's unique and unprecedented views. DiPasquale has "discovered only one other author who elaborates upon" similar ideas (p. 367). And although she finds exigency in ubiquity in "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating," Gigante finds exigency in the unique in "Forming Desire: On the Eponymous *In Memoriam* Stanza": "The striking absence of the form ever *since* Tennyson is marked by a notable exception, a 'brief lay' by Oscar Wilde" (p. 503). Even Gilbert, whose two articles in this sample rely heavily on the ubiquity *topos* as a way to synthesize diverse texts (and autobiographical experiences), pauses to point out the uniqueness of a small number of male poets who have taken on "certain qualities of the female-authored lament as opposed to the male-crafted elegy" (2001, p. 571). This tension manifests

also in Perloff's call for critics to use the term "signature" to discuss the unique qualities attributed to individual Language poets and her use of the ubiquity *topos* to characterize Susan Howe's signature: "Consider the leitmotif of framing and being framed that runs through both prose and visual poems, crisscrossing, in myriad ways, the related motifs of war and colonization" (p. 426). Similarly, Staten employs the ubiquity *topos* throughout his discussion of "the breathless undertone of political instability that runs through" *Middlemarch* while in his conclusion celebrating the novel's unique capacity to contain so much ubiquitous material:

> History has many dimensions, which move at different speeds, and few novels represent as many of them, in as much detail, as does *Middlemarch*: rise of the professions, scientization of medicine, development of modern party politics, increasing influence of the press, modernization of estate agriculture, aristocratization of the bourgeoisie, increasing interpenetration of town and country, and more. (p. 1003)

The above examples are the only explicit invocations of the value of uniqueness in this sample, and thus it does not seem appropriate to designate another special *topos*. Though it may be a value antithetical to ubiquity, we can see in its invocation by Staten and Perloff that it is possible to search for the ubiquitous within a unique text. In fact, this may be an assumption so embedded within literary critical practice that there is little need to remind readers that a text under examination is in some way unique. In her survey of citation conventions across disciplines, Dowdey (1992) noted that the humanities privileges the uniqueness of texts by "accentuating the importance of exact

words" (p. 333) through numerous quotations, an observation that helps explain this synthesis of these two opposing values. On the other hand, because of the effect of the rise of cultural studies on perceptions of the object of study, perhaps the location of uniqueness is in the process of being displaced from the literary text to the critic's observations.

Paradox. That 54% of the articles in this sample invoked the paradox *topos* came as a surprise as I had hypothesized that this *topos* of all the special *topoi* that Fahnestock and Secor observed in their earlier sample would be the most likely to have gone out of fashion.[6] And yet despite what I thought might have appeared in Fahnestock and Secor's sample as residual evidence of the then waning New Critical dominance of literary theory, the critics in this sample seemed to point to dualisms of apparently irreconcilable opposites when they could, too. Like Fahnestock and Secor, I observed paradoxes pointed to in passing on the way towards performing other argumentative maneuvers and at the heart of an article's major claims, though the "in passing" variety was much more common and may indicate a decrease in emphasis since Fahnestock and Secor's sample. Within this sample the paradox *topos* plays the most central role, as its title indicates, in Theisen's "The Four Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke." Repeatedly Theisen

[6] This hypothesis was influenced by my perception of the lack of a significant presence of the paradox *topos* in the undergraduate introductory literature course of my observational study presented in chapter 3, by that professor's comment during an interview that the paradox *topos* is highly New Critical and a strategy he would not want his students to use, and by comments made in overviews of the history of literary studies concerning the now-outmoded New Critics' penchant for paradox (see Richard Ohmann, 1996, p. 75).

asks readers to see "a simultaneity of presence and absence" (p. 123), "the simultaneous inclusion in ourselves and exclusion from ourselves" (p. 123), and a "duplicity between meaning and saying" that "explores the paradoxical simultaneity of both their difference and their unity" (p. 113). For Theisen, her object of study is paradoxical in nature: "Unfolding paradoxes of observation, modern art intends to be observed as observer itself" (p. 120). And with such a macroparadigm established, her reading of Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* naturally points to paradox: Rilke's actress Eleonora Duse "seen by all …became invisible" (p. 126). Though in a less overwhelming fashion than Theisen's focus on paradoxical play, the thesis of Albrecht's argument invokes the paradox *topos*: "*Invisible Man*'s parody of Emerson is best read, I believe, as a dual gesture of critique and affiliation" (p. 47). Similarly, Hayton's argument works to untangle the paradox of allegory she claims Usk found politically necessary to employ: "For Usk to rewrite his own place in London's political history, he must choose a vehicle which will allow him to say two things at once and be two people at once…The allegorical frame of the *Testament* provides Usk with the opportunity to have his work simultaneously read and misread" (p. 26).

Much more frequent than these primary applications of the paradox *topos* are instances of apparent paradoxes pointed to in passing on the way towards making other more central argumentative points. For instance, Gilbert tell us that "what gives special anguish to some of the antipastoral elegies that evolved out of World War I is the paradoxical status of the mourner as *himself a murderer*" (1999, p. 190) and Burton informs us that the "narrative difficulty" in *The Sound and the Fury* "reflects the

ineluctable contradiction between the novel's unusual, experimental fidelity to a notion of heteroglossia and its preoccupation with a subject to whom it denies voice" (p. 623). Within those articles that made passing observations of paradoxes I noted that the location of paradox was more frequently in the historical context surrounding the literary text or in the reception of the text as opposed to the text itself. Schaub, for instance, pauses in her analysis of Margaret Oliphant's *Miss Majoribanks* to point out that Queen Victoria "is an instance of the fundamental paradox of British constitutional monarchy" (p. 203), Gigante notes of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* that "indeed, the fundamental paradox of the poem is that it has long been embraced by an audience that recoils from some of its most powerful erotic energies" (p. 481), Perloff claims "indeed, the paradox is that, like the earlier avant-garde movements of the century, Language poetics may well become most widely know when it starts to manifest notable exceptions" (p. 433), and Gallagher assures that Margaret Tyler's "publication may seem startlingly innovative to us, but its underlying rationale denies its originality and reiterates a traditional model of authority" (pp. 315-16). This location of paradox differs from its location in the literary text found in the examples of the paradox *topos* Fahnestock and Secor provide and would seem to indicate a significant shift in the use of this *topos* in keeping with the development of the mistaken critic and context *topoi*.

Contemptus mundi. Though the paradox *topos* continues to thrive, the thematic *topos* Fahnestock and Secor playfully named *contemptus mundi* appears to have receded in prominence. Only six articles in the current sample clearly exhibited "an assumption of despair over the condition and course of modern society" (Fahnestock & Secor,

1991, p. 88). Although some critics such as Gilbert are working with genuinely "dark" topics such as widowhood and the effects of World War I on elegy, and thus may be said to value "works which directly express such despair" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 88), I noted little in this sample of what Fahnestock and Secor claim is "even more indicative of the appeal of this *topos*… the search for unresolvable tensions and shadows in literature that at face value seems optimistic" (1991, p. 88). I rarely noted the expectation of "a woeful nod of tacit agreement whenever they mention the alienation, seediness, anxiety, decay, declining values, and difficulty of living and loving in modern times" (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991, p. 88) because these qualities were rarely dwelled upon. To be sure, Staten clearly celebrates the greatness of *Middlemarch* by shelving it among the dire and bleak: "And, like the work of the great French realists as described by Lukacs and Auerbach, *Middlemarch* documents the choking of authentic human possibility by the banality and venality of ascendant bourgeois culture" (p. 991). But the assumptions underpinning Staten's statement seem to have been less singular in Fahnestock and Secor's earlier sample. McCann's rehabilitation of Norman Mailer's literary status stands out in this sample as the most extended application of the *contemptus mundi topos*. McCann attempts to rescue Mailer's reputation by comparing his *The Executioner's Song* to a more recent, less "literary" depiction of the same events in Mikal Gilmore's memoir published by a popular press. This comparison reveals to McCann that current conditions for literature "nowadays" are impoverished by "the disappearance of the conditions of possibility for Mailer's particular sensibility (that we take literature to be an important civic activity)" (p. 295). Comparisons that reveal this

decline occur throughout McCann's piece, leaving him to conclude with despair in its final sentences:

> Where Mailer aimed to speak for a spiritualized republic and where his writing was thus bound up and deeply in contention with the energies of Cold-War nationalism, Gilmore and his peers create a literature for an age of de-federalization and the decline of the welfare state. All that is left to that world it sometimes seems is the "fearful and private place" of the isolated family. (p. 331)

Though in a less sustained fashion, a handful of other articles in the sample contain similar gestures. Elder's plea for direct experience of nature to inform not just readings of Robert Frost but all ecocriticism, for instance, bemoans at one point that "such an experience must be rare for most of Frost's readers today. Our own work out of doors so often involves the noise of engines and our experience of solitude in nature is, conversely, more often associated with recreation than with work" (p. 653). Likewise, Gallagher's depiction of the fallen state of academic feminism shares this mournfulness:

> Feminism's charisma has been a victim of its own success. Its long march through the institutions, especially those of the American academy, have resulted in what Weber called "the routinization of charisma"….
>
> Even through the droning of the academic routinization of feminism, though, one continues to hear the charismatic timbre of former generations…. Our discourse is necessarily permeated by the paradoxes

> of the routinization of charisma, and postmodernism is a good a name as any for the lamentations we keep up as we bury the charismatic corpse ever deeper. (pp. 326-7)

However, in addition to sharing the *contemptus mundi topos*, the articles by Staten, McCann, Elder, and Gallagher also endorse a related assumption shared by a considerably larger number of articles in this sample, a new *topos* which favors action over despair.

Social justice. It appears the *contemptus mundi topos*, present in only 21% of the current sample, has receded in prominence to be replaced by a *topos* I came to term the social justice *topos* and observed in 19 (68%) of the articles. Though I observed a wide range in intensity of adherence to this topos, the assumption that brought together the articles that employed this topos is that literature and life are connected--that literature, regardless of when it was written, speaks to our present condition. But more precisely, the articles that invoked this topos sought in that assumed connection avenues towards social justice through advocating social change. Five of the articles in this sample boldly bring this assumption to the surface of their arguments. Geyh, like most of the other articles that invoke this topos, draws the connection between literary text and pursuit of a just society in her article's conclusion. According to Geyh, Meridel LeSueur's:

> *The Dread Road* instructs its readers in an activist reading practice that is not just applicable to the text, but also to the world, in fulfillment of Le Sueur's lifelong vision of art as action.

> How viable Le Sueur's populist/Marxist/feminist historiography might be for our historical moment is another matter….. even if the answers she had in mind are not quite the ones we might ultimately want, her writings expand the conceptual, historical and political space of this questioning and might help us to find some answers" (p. 98)

Berger similarly blurs the benefits of her argument's conclusions for understanding reading George Eliot's text and understanding living in the contemporary world:

> We have underestimated Eilot's investment in developing models of social identity that work hand-in-hand with the goals of liberal politics. Bringing Eliot's early novels into closer focus and recognizing their close association of social and political identities, transforms her critical trajectory. The division between the pastoral and the political novels disintegrates and gives the question of social identity purchase on the problem of politics. While Silas Marner may not be the forerunner of the cosmopolite, his cultivation of social differences would make him a surprisingly good candidate for today's "global village." (p. 326)

Likewise, for Burton, Faulkner's Compsons exemplify failed readers as well as failed lives from whose "experience" we can profitably learn: "For in a heteroglot world difference and uncertainty are the inevitable, often difficult, yet always potentially productive state of things" (p. 627). In a related vein, Schaub's critique of Margaret Oliphant's shortcomings as a writer includes Oliphant's lack of a clear program of feminist action: "The narrator's irony allows us to see this 'truth' about the world, but

not to do anything about it" (p. 225). Yet even this shortcoming yields a significant lesson for politically engaged writers today: "Her novel stands as an example of the difficulty of using comedy in a novel for political purposes" (p. 225).

However, the placement of these overt claims of applicability to contemporary life and political practice in the arguments' concluding remarks means that the leap from literary text to life mainly remains a suggested gesture that is not fleshed out. In fact, the general lack of backing in support of this warrant, to use Toulmin's terms, was a common characteristic among these articles that first alerted me to the existence of this special *topos* not previously characterized by Fahnestock and Secor. (When invoked for an audience who shares their disciplinary values, a special *topos* does not require the backing a more diverse audience would likely request.) On becoming aware of this topos, I began to see it in less overt gestures throughout the sample. DiPasquale, for instance, values overlooked Aemilia Lanyer for her feminism and because she "addresses the problematic situation of the female heterosexual in a sexist society" (p. 378), leaving unsaid that this problematic situation is one feminists continue to address today. And though what DiPasquale leaves unsaid borders closely on the *contemptus mundi topos*, I categorize it as applying the social justice *topos* because of its hope for social change.

In fact, a sense that the world has always been problematical, as opposed to the fallen condition the *contemptus mundi topos* assumes, can be gleaned from several articles and seems to only fuel a desire for social change. In his Foucauldian analysis of *Othello*, for instance, Matz does not suggest that early modern English society is any

better or worse than society before or after this period, but he does critically examine political and social relationships for contradictions and inequalities of race and gender. When Matz mentions that early modern England did not distinguish heterosexual between homosexual (p. 264), without explicitly stating so he suggests that we can gather from reading *Othello* a sense of the possibility of alternatives to current social structures. Similarly, Mazzola, in a parenthetical comment after describing some emotional benefits of the weak familial bonds predominant in early modern England, suggests that we should see in early modern English family structure the possibility for alternatives to a structure that is currently causing us problems: "(The internalization of family ties that encourages deeper, more intimate affections and desires may partly explain the problems tearing at the fabric of modern nuclear families)" (p. 515). Even Nagy's philological examination of 17th-century dictionaries subtly invokes this topos in its acknowledgement of social inequity and cultural capital: "the early lexicographers provided handbooks of 'cultural literacy' that attempted both to prescribe for the uneducated reader the established prestige culture and to prescribe a standard of eloquence" (p. 452). It is as if the rise of the social justice *topos* has tipped the balance upon which literary critics' views of history rest: what was once portrayed as modernity fallen from a glorious past is now portrayed as a past and present riddled with problems but reaching towards an improved future. Or, in Karl Popper's (1966) terms, the field has shifted from a view of history as retrogression to a view of history as progression, points of view historically tied to conservative and radical political agendas. That most of the few articles which invoke the *contemptus mundi topos* also

appeal, however weakly, to the social justice topos speaks to how far this balance has been overturned. Elder, for instance, takes care to include in his brief overview of the development of ecocriticism some praise for the subfield's inclusion of works by "authors of color" (p. 650) among its objects of study.

Though the distinction between text and experience my description of this *topos* necessitates may be a faulty one (what is the experience of reading a text if not a lived experience?), and though I may have pitched a too broad and ill-defined demarcation around this *topos*, I find it necessary to distinguish a special *topos* from which many of these critics drew shared assumptions of the social significance of their work and shared political values. This analysis is supported by Pullman's (1994) suggestion that "gender bias" (p. 383) and "ethics" (p. 381) are literary special *topoi* and by Ohmann's (1996) new Introduction and Afterthoughts to *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession*, in which he notes that literary studies has changed a great deal since his 1976 depiction of the MLA as a staunchly conservative organization antagonistic to younger members' political projects for social justice. Ohmann celebrates the development of feminism, postcolonial studies, poststructuralism, cultural studies, and queer studies as projects encouraged by the MLA (p. 337) and conjectures that now "many students choosing graduate work do so in part because in English they have found an ethos hospitable to the ideal of social justice" (p. xxxv). Further, Judith Butler, John Guillory, and Kendall Thomas (2000) explicitly acknowledge this development in their preface to the recently published anthology *What's Left of Theory? New Work on the Politics of Literary Theory*:

> The extraordinary interest in social theory and the law that has recently emerged in literary studies has seemed to many to constitute an important redirection of the field toward political themes and active political investments in justice, freedom, and equality. Whereas some argue that literature should remain cordoned off from social science and social theory, others are relieved that literary studies has moved toward a more active engagement with social issues, with race studies, practices of gender and sexuality, colonial space and its aftermath, the interstitial cultural spaces of globalization. It may be that literary scholars make poor social theorists, as Richard Rorty has argued, but it seems more likely that literary scholars bring insightful forms of reading to bear upon social and political texts that have great relevance for the course of our collective lives. (pp. xi-xii)

Of course, development of arguments along the lines this *topos* suggests is rare in this sample, with only five critics explicitly connecting their criticism to "real world" contemporary political projects. However, one can imagine these inchoate suggestions of potential other social realities and the attention to problems of racism, sexism, homophobia, class, and colonialism taken up by these critics in other forums where values cannot be assumed to be shared with the audience, such as a classroom. In such rhetorical situations, these critics may be more likely, under pressure from a less homogenous audience, to more fully argue these points and extend them to proposal

claims calling for political action as opposed to simply referencing them as commonly held value touchstones.

Overall Value of Complexity. The social justice *topos*, perhaps more distinctly than the other special *topoi* described above, clarifies the relationship between the storehouse of argumentative strategies the *topoi* are for a literary critic and the evidence of a literary critic's presumption of shared values with her audience that rhetorical analysis reveals. Fahnestock and Secor concluded their analysis with the observation that the five special *topoi* they observed "reduce to one fundamental assumption behind critical inquiry: that literature is complex and that to understand it requires patient unraveling, translating, decoding, interpretation, and analyzing. Meaning is never obvious or simple" (1991, p. 89). As every article in this sample is steeped in the same assumption, my analysis reaffirms their point. A "reality" beneath surface appearances still requires rigorous insight to reveal; paradigms, despite the unifying simplicity they suggest, are still far from obvious and must be applied with special skill and knowledge; ubiquitous textual elements are still somehow not identifiable as ubiquitous until deftly illuminated; and paradoxes still confound as much as clarify. In addition, the mistaken critic *topos* reiterates textual complexities by reminding readers how many other well-equipped readers have misread, the context *topos* reifies textual complexity by reminding readers of the seemingly infinite reinterpretations unearthed contextual connections invite, and the social justice *topos* restates textual complexity by linking texts to views of social and political realities in which issues of identity are complicated by so many factors--race, gender, class, sexuality, family dynamics, nationality, and

historical moment. And yet, because complexity as a value is so frequently appealed to in this sample, I would like to briefly explore how these articles portray complexity, and in so doing trace some tensions they set up between it and textual "ease," "clarity," and "coherence."

First, forms of the term "complexity" are ubiquitous among these articles as terms of praise. Geyh echoes many of the critics in this sample by valuing her subject, Meridel Le Sueur, for "the complexity of her aesthetic and political vision" (p. 82). For Geyh, Le Sueur fills a gap left by Marx and Engels because they "did not ultimately address the issue of women's particular oppression with the attention its complexity deserves" (p. 83). Table 2.4 presents some further examples of this value preference evident in this sample. To lack complexity, according to this sample, is to be simple, easy, clear, resolved, reduced, and/or unambiguous. The frequent linking of "merely" to one of these adjectives only amplifies the devaluing of simplicity and ease. Many times this disciplinary preference is invoked in applications of the appearance/reality and mistaken critic *topoi* that seek to establish the exigency for the critic's current undertaking, a strategy that Secor also observed as she notes that "the exigence for argument is often established by calling attention to *apparent* simplicity which masks *real* complexity" (1984, p. 108). Recall Berger's claim that the apparent lack of critical interest in George Eliot's sense of personal liability "seems to derive from the ease with which the novel makes and unmakes its guilty parties," but this ease is of course more complex than it may at first seem.

Table 2.4: Examples of Use of the Term "Complexity" as a Value Preferred Over Simplicity.

Author and Title of Article	
Perloff, Marjorie, "Language Poetry and the Lyric Subject: Ron Silliman's Albany, Susan Howe's Buffalo"	Perloff criticizes Language poetics for its blindness to a particular complexity she seeks to rectify: "Movement ethos, itself a stepchild of the poststructuralist critique of authorship, has, for too long now, occluded the critical need to discriminate difference, to define the signature of the individual lyric subject in it complex negotiations with its larger cultural and historical field of operation" (p. 434).
Theisen, Bianca, "The Four Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke"	The subject of Theisen's article is portrayed as developing previous theories of reading by increasing their complexity: "While the work of Wolfgang Iser has taken the relation between selection and combination as one of its guiding principles, it has charted a more complex model of a four-sided form" (p. 105). Likewise, Rilke's The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge contains a "highly confusing alternation of perspectives" and a "very dense network of allusions" (p. 121).
May, Brian, "Memorials to Modernity: Postcolonial Pilgrimage in Naipul and Rushdie"	May elevates Rushdie's work just above Naipaul's using this standard, "Rushdie's own complex community is yet more difficult to define than the virtual non-community of that famous longer Naipaul" (p. 258).
Gigante, Denise, "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating"	Gigante venerates Milton because he "complicates the category of physiological taste" (p. 88).
Nagy, Andrea R,. "Defining English: Authenticity and Standardization in Seventeenth-Century Dictionaries"	Nagy's examination of 17th-century dictionaries appears to be prompted by her observation that "previous debates have not recognized either the variations among the different dictionaries or the complexity within the genre as a whole" (p. 439).
Staten, Henry, "Is Middlemarch Ahistorical?"	"What Eliot writes as a novelist is carried away by the techne of novel writing from any possibility of simply mirroring her presumed 'real opinions,' and recent criticism has too often failed to respect this mediation" (p. 995).

But because simple, straightforward explanations of a text are always considered suspect in this environment, an interesting tension emerges from the articles in this sample concerning just how much resolution a critic can provide to a reading of a text.

Zamir appears to anticipate his audience's concern that the philosophical treatment of literature he is advocating could appear to reduce complexity by portraying the act of such criticism as a tightrope walk with "the ideal of nonreducible ethical insight" balanced over a tempting but avoidable sea of simplicity. Zamir repeatedly reassures his readers that in his reading of *Macbeth* "things are somewhat more complicated than a simple story of loss" (p. 529), "nihilism is not merely an experience in which things are seen as valueless" (p. 532), and that "things are more complicated then confirming or refuting" (p. 545). Thus when Zamir chides, "Let us avoid the temptation to reduce all this to a philosophical position" (p. 532), his audience should know this is a temptation he works diligently to avoid. An entire lack of resolution is celebrated in several of the articles. Gilbert enacts this celebration in "Widow" with an unconventional argumentative structure, mixing autobiography, extensive references, and phrasing of claims as questions. She also celebrates the "unresolved--*never* resolved--struggles to get beyond the grave" in Thomas Hardy's poems that come closer in this way to Gilbert's favored "female-authored lament as opposed to the male-crafted elegy" (p. 571). In "Forming Desire: On the Eponymous *In Memoriam* Stanza," Gigante also lauds not just the difficult to resolve but the unresolvable aspects of Tennyson's poem: "Despite various gestures towards resolution… the message that Tennyson formally builds into the structure of the poem is that there can be no satisfactory 'answer' to the problem of his 'lost desire'" (p. 497). However, despite a general valorization of the unresolvable and irreducible, each critic does seek to resolve some issue or delineate a reading. Schaub brings this tension to the fore when she

reprimands those critics who avoid resolution while simultaneously chastising those critics who simplify matters: "Such an open-ended formulation retreats from final interpretation, a move that is too easy and too common in our post-deconstructionist critical environment. The ambiguity and constructedness of queenliness in *Miss Majoribanks* certainly can be explained, but not simply by seeing Oliphant as either feminist or antifeminist" (pp. 197-8).

The tensions surrounding resolution in this sample are mirrored in the tensions surrounding coherence. Again, recall Berger's claim that in Eliot's novels a code of personal liability is only "seemingly self-contained and coherent" (p. 307). Likewise, Mazzola elevates Philip Sidney's poetry by comparing it to his siblings' less complex—and mundanely coherent--work. In Mary and Robert Sidney's poetry, Mazzola argues, is an effort to "comprehend their brother's doubts through the unveiling of more stable and coherent worlds" (p. 534), while in Philip's poetry she finds "elaborate dissembling," "secrecy," and "suggestiveness" (p. 518). Likewise, recall that McCann reveals coherence beneath apparent chaos, "Beneath Mailer's various literary experiments, his ramblings and ravings, in other words, lies a coherent political vision" (p. 307), and that Hayton seeks to correct the critical neglect Usk's *Testament of Love* has endured due to its "perceived lack of structure" (p. 23) by locating "coherent meaning and structure in the text" (p. 24). Because the object of such searches would likely be valued, the status of coherence, whether a sought for ideal or a mark of simplicity, does not appear to be fixed in this disciplinary discourse community.

In fact, what may be one of the most noteworthy aspects of this overarching value of complexity is the vast array of theoretical and ideological differences it unites. On one hand, Burton's endorsement of postructuralist theories, particularly those by Bakhtin and Foucault, is in like company with the majority of critical views expressed in this sample. She notes that "few critics since the 1970s" have shared the presumption that *The Sound and the Fury* "is inherently unified; indeed, most have focused on its contradictions and the ways it complicates attempts at resolution and undermines attempts at closure" (p. 610). This observation, however, prompts her to chastise critics for their over-reliance on the trustworthiness of a simplifying text, Faulkner's Appendix, the impetus behind which "was to transform a very complicated dialogic text into a strictly monologic account" (p. 614). Thus Burton encourages a new line of criticism reflexively focusing on this very over-reliance and very much appealing to the disciplinary discourse community's value of complexity: "Given how it has constrained readings of *The Sound and the Fury* for over fifty years… the Appendix's complicated relationship with the novel is surely the more crucial topic for further study" (p. 625). On the other hand, a critic such as Richardson whose argument that New Woman author Sarah Grand was not nearly as radically feminist as critics have recently described her would seem to argue against the spirit of the social justice *topos* widespread throughout this disciplinary discourse community. And yet, despite this tarnishing of a potential feminist hero, Richardson takes care to explain that her argument does not return New Woman writers to the insignificance recent critics have been rescuing them from but instead furthers this project: "However, this reading does

not reduce but rather broadens the cultural significance of the New Woman, shedding light on an emergent concept of moral biology and civic motherhood, and revealing the social significance of the late nineteenth-century romance plot" (p. 248). But perhaps the clearest example of a critic arguing against the grain of the current climate of literary theory while still appealing to complexity is Elder in his "The Poetry of Experience." Recall that his proposal to incorporate direct experience of the natural world into critical and pedagogical practice is motivated by his sharp critique of the "jargon, self-referentially, and a narrow professionalism" of "contemporary theory" (p. 650). In addition to criticizing the contemporary scene of his disciplinary discourse community, many of the assumptions underpinning Elder's argument harken back to a much earlier period in the history of literary criticism. His use of personal narrative to describe and inspire a return to appreciation of the natural world would find good company among the belletrists of over a century ago. And yet Elder's appeals to the value of complexity speak directly to his contemporary audience, claiming to complicate readings of Frost even further than applications of contemporary literary theories do:

> My purpose in the present reading is certainly not to reduce the poetry to its germinating instance. Rather, it is to suggest the value of cultivating, in our own physical experience, an appreciation of the soil from which the art has sprung…. This is a helpful way of formulating the never resolved yet intimate relationship between a finished poem, with its tempered complexity, and the surges of impulse and experience that

> inspired it and that are perpetuated within it…. Any reading of Frost's poetry that reduces the physicality of the landscape or the labor of farmers to nothing more than intellectual argument or abstract music is itself a fantasy in this sense—an escape from the texture and solidity of fact. Both work and nature are more than tropes for this poet. (p. 654)

Though whether Elder's strategy is successful in convincing his audience is unknown, his vehement appeals to complexity, irreducibility, and lack of resolution may allow him to be heard by a potentially hostile audience.

One last observation on the overarching value of complexity concerns its association with pleasure. Fahnestock and Secor conclude "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism" by noting that though none of the articles they analyzed "take any account of pleasure as the end of literature…. the pleasure principle is not absent in criticism" but is instead "transferred from the literature to the criticism" (1991, p. 94). With the possible exception of the pleasure Elder seems to take in recounting his day's experience operating a scythe and subsequent return to Frost's "Mowing," pleasure was not an explicit principle for criticism among the articles in this sample. However, a lack of pleasure was occasionally associated with the much-maligned state of simplicity. Hayton, for instance, includes in her list of erroneous reasons for the critical neglect of Usk's *Testament of Love* the perception that this text is "lackluster, incomprehensible, or 'dull'" (p. 22). Likewise, Gallagher depicts her early, mistaken reactions to Margaret Tyler's work as filled with disappointment because Tyler "not only failed to be a heroine but also failed for boring and obvious reasons" (p. 310). Both Hayton and

Gallagher go on to argue that Usk's and Tyler's works are far more complex than these previous critical responses to them have understood. Thus, as Fahnestock and Secor speculated, there does appear to by an unstated link between the value of pleasure and the value of complexity, that central, highly flexible value of this disciplinary discourse community.

Conclusion

This analysis taken with Fahnestock and Secor's allows us to see both the disciplinary conservative and flexible functions of the special *topoi*. Amidst so many opposing points of view (so many other "mistaken critics") and tumultuous paradigm shifts accompanying the advance of new literary theories, most of the special *topoi* of literary criticism have survived. Beyond object of study--the definition of which has changed significantly so that, for instance, to include *Gone with the Wind* on a syllabus would no longer be an act requiring defense as Secor (1984, p. 107) once portrayed it--special *topoi* may well serve as the almost imperceptible and generally taken for granted fibers that hold together this disparate and diverse discourse community. They may be what allow such an apparently disciplinarily conservative, even belletristic,[7] critic as Elder to discourse with, or at least appear in the same journal as, Theisen, a

[7] Bear in mind, however, that Williams (1999) characterizes the latest trend in literary criticism as "New Belletrism." Elder's use of personal narrative, a mode of discourse also used in this sample by Gilbert and Gallagher, and encouragement of literary appreciation, though a throwback to an earlier moment in literary history, may be the new direction of the field.

poststructuralist determined to suspend meaning in deconstructivist play. Their use was spread across articles appearing in long-established journals with roots in philological studies, journals established during New Criticism's heyday, and more recently established journals that have had enough time in circulation to develop a reputation for their nourishment of poststructuralist theoretical approaches.

However, the ways in which the stases and special *topoi* have developed since Fahnestock and Secor's analysis, particularly the rise of the mistaken critic and context subvariants of the appearance/reality and paradigm *topoi*, would seem to signal a dramatic shift in the field away from the practices of isolated meditation on textual particulars observed by Fahnestock and Secor, Bazerman, and MacDonald and towards a program of scholarly research that shares much in common with the rhetorical practices of the sciences. Though these fields continue to differ in obvious as well as subtle ways (recognition of their opposing value preferences in the complexity/simplicity binary gets to the heart of a key difference), their portrayal of their projects as continuing conversations, the individual contributions to which advance larger projects beyond the scope of any one contribution, are analogous. In this way, recent literary criticism harkens back to the scientism of the contributions to the first *PMLA* discussed in chapter one. It is interesting to note this apparent resurgence of disciplinary "rigor" and its apparatuses in light to the recent critiques of disciplinarity made by literary scholars (Downing, Harkin, Shumway, & Sosnoski, 1987; Downing & Sosnoski, 1995; Sosnoski, 1994, 1995; Spanos, 1993; Ohmann, 1996).

The supplanting of the *contemptus mundi topos* with the social justice *topos* suggests some of the character of one of the larger projects literary critics might view their work as contributions towards. Likewise, the development of this new *topos* demonstrates that the conservative function of special *topoi* can be radically remade from within the discourse community. Subsequent research could analyze the special *topoi* utilized in other samples of articles drawn from key moments in the development of the discipline's discourse over the last century and into the next to further investigate the nature of their conservative and progressive functions.

This study not only supports and expands Fahnestock and Secor's original findings, it also illustrates the continued usefulness of their methodology. Further research in the rhetoric of disciplinary discourse communities should consider the usefulness of the tools Classical rhetoric provides for uncovering less obvious, surface textual features. The time seems ripe to further research, extending the work begun by Bazerman (1981), MacDonald (1987, 1989, 1994), and Fahnestock and Secor (1988), that compares disciplinary discourse communities at this more embedded level of values. Richard Ohmann has described disciplinary differences at this level:

> A scientific theory achieves one of its ends when it succeeds in extricating the regularity from its penumbra of untidy detail. There is no need for the scientist as scientist to return to particulars once he has accounted for them. Our situation is quite different. We need generalization and theory, to be sure. . . [but] at the end of literary study

> resides the work itself, in its complexity and uniqueness. We value the uniqueness above everything else, and wish to preserve it. (1996, p. 13)

In accounts intended for nonmembers, scientific discourse communities are portrayed as valuing simplicity. As one statistics textbook puts it, "As with everyday explanations, even more so with scientific explanations. The ideal of parsimony gives preference to the simplest explanation adequate to account for a given corpus of data" (Abelson, 1995, p. 17).[8] And yet a simple division casting science with simplicity and literary study with complexity may itself be too simple. George Johnson (2001) recounts for a public audience a recent controversy among particle physicists and solid-state physicists over the viability of a grand unification theory with some solid-state physicists launching a challenge against the dominant, reductive approach "in which the most complex phenomena are boiled down to a unique underlying theory" by asserting that ultimately "at the base of reality is random noise" (p. F5). Future research into the rhetoric of disciplinary discourse should investigate what is happening at the embedded level of values and their manifestation as special *topoi*. Additionally, research is needed to better probe the issue of how tied to specific disciplines certain values and special *topoi* are. Interestingly, Toulmin (1979) describes a warrant common to "aesthetics and psychology" that resembles Fahnestock and Secor's characterization of the ubiquity

[8] This articulation of "Occum's razor" was also echoed by a scientist answering callers' questions on my local public radio station during a weekly "Science Forum" segment of a call-in show called "Vox Pop. " In response to a caller's question about black matter in space and the possibility of other sources of gravitational pull in the universe, the scientist answered (and this is a paraphrase because I was driving while listening), "Ask any scientist, and generally the simplest answer is considered the best answer" ("Science Forum," 2001).

topos. He explains that in these (broad) fields, it is understood that exemplification, rather than reliance on formula or calculation, is a solid source of grounds for a claim. Toulmin's claim here, along with claims made by Dowdey (1992) and the professor of my observational study presented in Chapter 3, suggests it is worth investigating the acceptance of special *topoi* such as ubiquity across the humanities and social sciences.

Future research should also go beyond the methodology of this current study to examine the effectiveness of these articles with their intended audience. Paul, Charney, and Kendall (2001) rightly remind us of the limitations of the assumption that publication equates with rhetorical success. Studies that examine members of the disciplinary discourse community in the act of reading and interacting with these texts are needed to further verify and refine the role the special *topoi* play in an argument's effectiveness.

Beyond its relevance for rhetoricians interested in academic disciplines and discourse communities, this study may prove useful to literary scholars interested in introducing their field to novices, whether undergraduate or graduate students. Its foregrounding of assumptions usually in the background of discourse could be of assistance to professors finding it difficult to articulate where and how a novice's writing falls short of meeting its audience's expectations. At a more advanced level, graduate students and their mentors may find this study helpful in identifying where in their arguments they are simply reiterating a mantra to the discipline's values and where they might push past this epideictic function to produce new knowledge. However, research on whether the special *topoi* of a field can be taught successfully as abstract

ideals is necessary. The effectiveness of explicit instruction in discourse features that have been traditionally transmitted tacitly is a controversial matter, with theories of "situated learning" tending to favor tacit absorption over the teaching of abstractions.

Lastly, this study does little to confirm or dispute Fahnestock and Secor's ultimate conclusion in "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism" that literary criticism's primarily epideictic functions make it a practice parallel to religion. To be sure, there are historical grounds for making this claim; Eagleton (1983), Scholes (1985, 1998), and Ohmann (1996) see early institutionalized literary study as a substitute for institutionalized religion which had failed to maintain its ideological status in the popular mind. However, further research is needed to examine the current state of this relationship. Indeed, Scholes (1985, 1998) argues that since the late 1960s secular literary study has steadily moved away from serving a religious function. I will conclude by noting, though, that Fahnestock and Secor's comparison, if still valid, could undercut the political aspirations of literary criticism's social justice *topos* by relegating them to a purely ceremonial and specialized, non-public sphere. Fahnestock and Secor may not emphasize enough the dual role of literary critics as scholars and teachers--or even bearers of literary culture. Perhaps their alignment of literary criticism with religion, which deflates literary criticism's deliberative aspirations, is another manifestation of their previously noted privileging of scientific discourse—the tensions between religion and science seeming now age old. Or perhaps it is indeed a warranted criticism; to be sure, in this sample applications of the social justice *topos* were never developed into implementable or even fully formed proposals. More

research in the vein of work by Haas (1994), Geisler (1994), and Herrington (1985, 1988, 1992) could investigate this issue by examining communication between this specialized discourse community and undergraduates in general education curricula and still other, broader publics.

II. Liminal Discourse

II. "Liminal" Discourse

What Professors Say About Disciplinarity and Student Discourse

Just as rhetorical analyses of the kinds presented in Chapters 1 and 2 of historical and contemporary professional discourse in literary studies are needed, so too are analyses of discourse in the sites where literary scholars, as Watkins (1989) points out, spend a good deal of their working hours--classrooms. In light of the lively debate among literary scholars over the place for disciplinarity in undergraduate literature courses and the findings of rhetoricians indicating that undergraduate courses across the curriculum sometimes encourage students to enter disciplinary conversations and sometimes are "predisciplinary," I recently sought to investigate the role of disciplinarity in the undergraduate literature requirement at one large research university. From November 2000 to April 2001, I interviewed eight professors who were teaching or had recently taught one of the three variants (English, American, or World) of Masterworks of Literature, a course required of most majors at the university, but which most English majors bypass, in students' sophomore year.[1] The course is usually taught in a large lecture hall with upwards of 200 students attending lectures twice a week and meeting in smaller TA-led discussion sections once a week. I asked the professors to describe their goals for the course, whether these goals are influenced by the fact that most students in the course are pursuing majors other than English, how

[1] One interview was conducted via e-mail; the rest, conducted in the professors' offices, were audiotaped.

they evaluate students' performance, whether they have their students write during the semester and for what purpose, and, if applicable, how they would compare the purposes and functions of their own professional writing with what they ask students to compose. I also examined syllabi and some assignments and exams used by 16 professors and instructors of this course between 1998 and 2001.

I found the professors represented the relationship between the discourse produced in their courses and the discourse of their professional community in a variety of ways. First, though all included some type of essay questions on the exams for the course, not all of the professors required papers written outside of class, citing the logistical difficulties so many students present and a perception of a growing number of cases of plagiarism. Of those who did have students write papers, development of argumentation and persuasion skills was consistently named among the purposes intended for their writing. Though all but one of the professors named providing a chronological survey of a period and/or a nation's literature as a goal for the course, the descriptions of additional overall purposes and goals for the course were more diverse. Six indicated that persuading their students to enjoy, even appreciate and be enthusiastic about, reading literature (or to enjoy the course) was a challenge they themselves enjoyed and embraced. Of these six, one listed only one other additional goal for his students: to "learn something about their own country" and culture. Two named the development of critical thinking skills and one the development of careful reading skills as goals. One of these professors specified more clearly the type of "critical engagement" she is interested in encouraging in her students--an interrogation of issues

of social inequity in their culture such as racism--while another took pains to assure me his course was in no way "political." Another described his course as developing "literate citizens," while three others suggested the skills their course helped develop would be useful to students in their courses and careers in other fields. One professor stated she saw her course as providing "a glimpse of what looking at literature for a major [in English] might seem like" by introducing "different critical approaches"; two asserted they had no intention of "trying to make English majors." Two others indicated their pedagogy is rooted in a particular critical approach: one her current work in cultural studies, particularly trauma theory, about which she is currently writing a book, and the other recognized that his penchant for having students detect "certain themes" in short passages and relating them to the work as whole is "probably a little bit old fashioned… [and] New Critical."

Thus, one professor appears to at least partially follow Graff in providing some introduction to a variety of critical approaches currently used by professionals in literary studies. Another, as Harkin, Spanos, Felber, and Bialostosky advocate, teaches within the framework of the critical approach she herself uses in her professional writing. And still others are resistant to introducing any professional-level discourse practices, though it is not possible for me to say if this is because they, like Sosnoski and Downing, see socializing students into disciplines as perpetuating power structures that ought to be questioned. And though pleasure as a goal need not be incompatible with introducing disciplinary discourse practices, it is interesting to note that several professors I interviewed named few other aims for their pedagogy than enjoyment. Some seem to

maintain a "Great Books" tradition in their pedagogical practice, viewing their work as transmitting a canon of cultural thought and values. Some claim, like several recent "writing about literature" textbooks do, that literary study develops skills and habits appropriate in the work of other disciplines. And the descriptions many more provided suggest that the course fosters a belletristic appreciation of literature that long ago retreated from the professional sphere of discourse. The philological model of course organization along historical periods and national identities, a model some indicated the institutional title and description of the course requires, also survives here. And at least in one course, if not partially in others, New Criticism still reigns.[2]

This sampling of pedagogical approaches at one institution provides an important context for the second half of this dissertation. As we have seen, many professors, including the one whose courses I describe in the next two studies, state that their intention is not to introduce disciplinary discourse conventions in such introductory courses. However, as work in the rhetoric of science has demonstrated, practitioners often do not explicitly acknowledge, and may likely be unaware of, the rhetorical nature of their discourse, especially those assumptions they share with fellow practitioners and from which they can warrant claims in their professional discourse. Looking again for the profession's conventional stases and special *topoi* as signposts, in the second half of this dissertation I explore the "liminal" qualities of discourse in an undergraduate literature course through observational and interventional methods.

[2] Ann Addington's (2001) description of her experience in a graduate English seminar indicates that New Criticism continues to hold sway in some graduate coursework as well.

CHAPTER THREE

"Get Comfortable With Uncertainty": A Study of the Conventional Values of Literary Analysis in and Undergraduate Literature Course

Fahnestock and Secor, in their identification of five special *topoi* common to a group of articles of literary criticism published between 1978 and 1982, observed that "special literary *topoi* invoke the shared assumptions of the community of literary scholars, and at the same time create that community" (1991, p. 84). To use them appropriately is "to announce one's membership in the community of literary scholars" (p. 91), a community which values complexity and non-reductive argumentation. Though we have seen in Chapter 2 that these special *topoi* continue to shape and be shaped by the discourse community of literary scholars, their status has not been examined in pedagogical practice. Fahnestock and Secor's description of these special *topoi* provides five signals to look for which might, if not "announce one's membership in the community of literary scholars" (p. 91), at least announce a student's acquisition of some key conventions of literary study.

Interestingly, the "problems" that literature instructors perceive (and frequently complain of, see Scholes 1998 p. 159) their students facing when writing about literature are less frequently ones of grammar or "basic writing" and more frequently lack of understanding of the tactics, goals, and values of discipline-specific discourse. Some cited "problems" are students' overuse of plot summary (Self, 1988; Wentworth, 1987; Herrington, 1988), lack of textual reference (Rawlins, 1980), and lack of

understanding the "value" of literature "which can be discovered by critical reading" (Thompson, 1989, p. 37). In one of the few studies of student discourse, Herrington (1988) identified and evaluated the lines of reasoning, perceptions of audience and purpose, and ethos construction in students' writing and the instructor's response in an undergraduate literature course intended for majors. Her observations of the course, interviews with the professor and students, and inductive taxonomy of the claims and warrants the students used in their writing reveal that much of the methodology for learning to read and write "like an English major" was provided implicitly, with students' ability to infer these methods varying in success.

However, Herrington did not look for relationships between writing by these students and the writing that literature professors typically contribute to the discourse of their field. One of the types of claims that Herrington inductively categorized from successful student writing, "statements that set up some dissonance" (p. 137) does suggest the special *topoi* of Fahnestock and Secor's analysis of professional discourse. MacDonald (1987, 1989) argues that the loosely defined problems engaged by academic writing in literary studies present unique challenges to undergraduates. Though MacDonald extrapolates consequences and recommendations for undergraduate instruction from analyses of professional-level discourse, no systematic study of the role of professional-level discourse in an undergraduate literature course has been conducted.

The purpose of this study is to take a first step towards determining if such a line of research is warranted. The special *topoi* Fahnestock and Secor identified can serve

as well enough defined markers of disciplinary values and rhetorical strategies to look for in classroom discourse and student texts. It would seem unlikely that a professor's perception of the value of studying literature would radically change when leaving the journal article she is working on in her office to lead an undergraduate literature course. Because the special *topoi* of a discourse community are more often than not shared and transmitted tacitly among members, I suspect that instructors are often unaware of not only their use of the special *topoi* of their field, but the extent to which they are implicitly encouraging their students, even non-majors, to invoke them, too. MacDonald suggests that "the formal features that vary from one discipline to another (e.g., use of the third person or the passive) are visible enough to cause less trouble for inexperienced writers than the more internalized, implicit assumptions that exist within disciplines" (1987, p. 315). Do the problems that literature instructors perceive undergraduates repeatedly encountering result in part from not making the values behind the special *topoi* clear? Or, as particularly may be the case when the course is intended for non-majors, might a student's rejection of these values manifest itself as "poor writing"? For this study I observed the verbal and written interactions between professor, teaching assistants, and undergraduates as the students tackled the challenges of writing about literature. My guiding questions were:

- Are the special *topoi* of the professional practitioners of literary analysis and their attendant value of complexity, as identified by Fahnestock and Secor, present in the discourse of an undergraduate course?

- When writing and revising, do students acknowledge and appeal to these special *topoi*?
- Do these special *topoi* influence evaluation of student writing?

Modeling my methodology on the work of Herrington (1985, 1988, 1992), I used a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. These methods allowed me to observe many of the ways information about the expectations of an assignment were communicated by the professor and teaching assistants and how these expectations were met in students' writing. More particularly, these methods also allowed me to observe how, if at all, the special *topoi* of literary criticism are conveyed to students and how, if at all, students make use of them. I suspected that the lectures and discussions of the course might serve as models for the kinds of issues and arguments students could pursue in their papers. The use of surveys, independent raters, and interviews provided checks to my observations of the oral and written discourse of this course. I will present my study in two parts: "The Discourse of the Course" presents qualitative analyses of the role the special *topoi* of literary studies played in lectures, discussions and students' texts, and "Students' Perceptions" presents quantitative analyses of two surveys that attempt to assess students' perceptions of the purposes of their writing for the course and the appropriateness of the special *topoi* for this rhetorical situation.

I. The Discourse of the Course

Methods

Participants:

The participants included the 221 undergraduate students enrolled during the Spring 1999 semester in a "Masterworks in American Literature" course at a large university (93 of whom signed a consent form expressing a willingness to let me contact them for interviews and photocopy their graded papers). Most of the students in the course were sophomores and juniors and not English majors.

The participants also included the six graduate student teaching assistants who led the course's discussion sections and evaluated the students' performance (referred to here as Alice, Barbara, Chandani, Denise, Erica, and Faizah). All but one of the graduate student TAs (Alice) were enrolled in the professor's "Teaching Masterworks of American Literature," a seminar designed to supplement the TAs' teaching experience.[1] I was also enrolled in this course. Barbara, Denise, and Erica were in their second semester of graduate study in English, Chandani and Faizah were in their fourth

[1] In the "Teaching Masterworks of American Literature" seminar, the professor lead discussion with the TAs and a small number of other graduate students of Christenson's *Education for Judgement: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership* (1991), Graff's *Beyond the Culture Wars* (1992), and Scholes' *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English* (1985), a text that he portrayed as particularly influential on his teaching philosophy. Later in the semester the graduate students lead discussions of selections from works such as Graff's *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (1987), Lentricchia and McLaughlin's *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (1995), and Richter's *Falling Into Theory* (1994). Several seminar sessions were entirely devoted to "calibrating" the TAs' grading by reading together a selection of students' papers and discussing their holistic rankings of the papers. Seminar meetings were also spent discussing classroom management issues. The graduate students were required to write and revise one of the two-page paper assignments that they then in turn required of the undergraduates in addition to a short, 10-15 page, seminar paper.

semester, and Alice was in her second semester as a graduate student in creative writing.

The professor of the course is an Associate Professor in English specializing in American Literature, Modernism, and Literary Theory. He received his doctorate from an Ivy League school in the late 1980s, publishes numerous articles and books, and is considered an innovator in his department for his use of web-based, multimedia materials in his courses. He had taught "Masterworks in American Literature" several times.

An analysis following the methodology used in Chapter 2 indicated that three of this professor's articles published between 1984 and 1992 followed the stasis and special *topoi* conventions current in his discipline. These articles addressed primarily the definitional stasis and invoked the appearance/reality, contextual paradigm, *contemptus mundi*, and social justice *topoi* in keeping with their depiction in Chapter 2.

Setting:

The "Masterworks in American Literature" course is a "lower division" literature course and fulfills a requirement for various academic majors. Following is the professor's description of his version of the course from his syllabus:

> "American Literature," according to Daniel Aaron, "is the most searching and unabashed criticism of our national limitations that exists." This course aims at examining these limitations through a selective reading of major American writers from the 17th to the 20th century, tracing the development of major literary forms, themes, and historical

> and cultural trends. At its most fundamental level, this course will use the study of literature to help its students become better readers, writers, and thinkers. But also at stake in this course will be the notion of an "American identity," and the ways in which the issues of race, class, region, sexuality, and gender affect this construction. We will also explore how marginalized groups face the prospect of self-formation. In this way, issues of descent and dissent and the role they play in the formation of a democratic culture will constitute the focus of our study. The approach will be loosely historical, though the large period we will attempt to cover will necessitate some rather big jumps in time.

Appendix A presents the reading list for the course. This professor required students to keep a "dialectical" reading journal which they present during conferences with their TA (worth 30% of their final grade), write two two-page papers (worth 40% of their final grade), and take a final exam which includes essay questions (worth 30% of their final grade). The professor described the assigned papers as arguments about the assigned readings on topics that the students generate independently. Students were required to revise the first two-page paper after receiving written feedback from the TA. After receiving a grade and additional written feedback, students had the option of revising both papers.

Lectures were held twice weekly in a large lecture hall. The professor lectured, frequently using an overhead projector to underline passages in the text under discussion and occasionally playing songs and projecting film clips and web pages. He

also often raised questions during his lectures, and students regularly called out answers and sometimes raised their own questions. The students met once weekly in smaller, TA-led discussion sections in standard classrooms. Each TA led two discussion sections a week.

Classroom Observation:

I observed and took field notes during all 29 lectures delivered by the professor to the entire class and at least two, sometimes more, of the twelve discussion sessions a week, totaling 34 discussion sections. I also observed four conferences with students held by two TAs. Additionally, I read the online discussion forum postings of each discussion section. As a participant/observer of the graduate level Teaching Masterworks seminar, I attended all meetings and took careful notes during discussions of the undergraduates' writing assignments. Though I do not report on my observations of the Teaching Masterworks seminar here, many of my understandings of the pedagogical goals of the professor and TAs that were discussed in this course inform my analysis.

Analysis of Student Texts:

Data collection. After the revised drafts of the students' first paper were handed in and graded, each TA identified two papers she perceived as particularly successful, two papers she perceived to be unsuccessful, and two "middle-of-the road" papers. Through this method I obtained rough and final drafts by 23 students who consented to participate in my study which I both qualitatively analyzed and asked independent raters to analyze. I also qualitatively analyzed the syllabus for the course.

Analysis. The raters were two English graduate students studying rhetoric. They were trained to recognize the five special *topoi* of literary analysis by reviewing examples from Fahnestock and Secor's article as well as examples culled from the students' second papers. They read the 23 final drafts that had been "cleaned" of the TAs' written commentary and grading. As it is possible and quite likely that a writer could employ more than one of these *topoi*, these raters distinguished between the writer's use of primary, secondary, and tertiary *topoi*, as well as indicated if the writer used no *topoi* at all or only one or two. If they indicated that a *topos* was present in the paper, the raters then evaluated the effectiveness of its use. Four criteria for successful use of a special *topos* were developed:

1) The writer's use of the special *topos* meets all the defining criteria of the special *topos*
2) The special *topos* is used to further an argument or claim
3) Evidence is given to support the use of the special *topos*
4) The special *topos* is used to elucidate a textual feature that is not self-evident or used to illustrate the complexity of the text.

The raters evaluated a student writer's use of a special *topos* by rating these four statements on a four-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). I also qualitatively analyzed the written feedback from the TAs, looking for where and how the special *topoi* are mentioned, and the students' first and final drafts, determining what changes transpired between these two drafts.

Interviews:

I conducted 30-minute audiotaped interviews with five of the students who wrote papers identified by the TAs as successful. After some preliminary, broad questions about their experience in the course, the questions I asked these five students called for retrospective accounts of their choice of text to write on, choice of argument, revision choices, and the role of TA feedback in their writing processes.

When the semester was over, I conducted separate, audiotaped interviews with the TAs and professor,[2] sharing some of my findings and asking for their response.

Results

Introduction to the Course: The Syllabus

In his syllabus for this course, this professor describes the course's two essay assignments under the subheading "'I don't know what you want; I don't know what you're looking for.'" He goes to some lengths to explain in this document that there are no firm guidelines in terms of content for the essays he or the TAs can provide. He does warn students not to "simply repeat what we said in lecture or class" and that the essays should be "an individual, not a personal, response to the reading." Repeated encouragement to look at the essays as arguments is provided. He asks students to develop "fully an interesting, insightful, tightly focused argument that engages a text we've read" and that provides "clear support" and "argumentation that fully justifies

[2] Due to scheduling constraints, I interviewed Barbara and Erica together.

your conclusions." Furthermore, evidence of the specific "community values" that Fahnestock and Secor identify can also be found in the syllabus. Fahnestock and Secor note that the special *topoi* they identify can be reduced to "one fundamental assumption behind critical inquiry: that literature is complex…. Meaning is never obvious or simple" (p. 89). This value is reflected in the professor's admonition that the student essay's "argument should be both complex and clear," itself an example of literary critics' partiality for the *topos* of paradox. Students are told that their "audience, of course, is your TA, and you can assume that your TA has read the text you're talking about but has not formulated any opinions or conclusions about it." Thus students are encouraged to address a professional audience—though the assumption that the audience has not formed an opinion on the texts is likely divergent of the view of audience professional literary scholars hold. The professor also asks that the students "make sure that your argument doesn't rest on assumptions that your audience may not share or that you haven't clearly articulated." Thus the issue of the professional community's warrants matching or not matching the students' is raised in the syllabus. However, the course description on the syllabus also suggests that this course will help students improve their general, all-purpose writing skills: "At its most fundamental level, this course will use the study of literature to help its students become better readers, writers, and thinkers." During our interview, the professor reiterated this intention to offer instruction in general-purpose argumentation, and in fact stated that it is not his desire to teach the students in this course literary criticism. The potential

tensions between the student's specialized, real audience for their writing and this pedagogical goal are at the heart of what my study seeks to investigate.

Classroom Observation:

Of course, admonitions on a printed syllabus can be contradicted and subverted by the oral discourse between instructors and students. However, my observations suggest that encouragement to view discourse on literature as argumentation carried over into the professor's lectures, as did appeals to the special *topoi*. I observed the professor, TAs, and students frequently use verbs such as "argue," "back up," "persuade," and "support" to describe the work required in the paper assignments. I observed the professor use these terms twelve times in eleven, or 38%, of the lectures. The TAs, in dealing with addressing their comments on student papers and in answering students' questions in their discussion sections, used these terms 24 times in 17, or 50%, of the section meetings I observed. Table 3.1 lists the number of appeals to each of the special *topoi* I observed made in the lectures and discussions by the professor, TAs, and students.[3] All five *topoi* were invoked, though understandably not by name. The appearance/reality *topos* predominated in lectures and discussions, and its use was unique in sometimes being invoked negatively. Appearance/reality claims were sometimes challenged, derided, and, as I will explain, "outlawed" by the professor. Yet Table 1 also shows us that, with greater frequency, the appearance/reality *topos*, along

[3] These frequency counts are taken from my field notes (approximately 10,000 words). These notes are incomplete transcriptions of the lectures and discussions I observed. For instance, I did not transcribe when a speaker read a passage from a text.

with the other *topoi*, were invoked by the professor, TAs, and students to discuss and orally test claims about the assigned readings. Of course, these five special *topoi* are not the only possible *topoi* that can be invoked in classroom discourse. My objective, as a preliminary step, was to determine if these five functioned in the classroom discourse at all; however, I began to notice other assumed values in the discourse as my observations progressed. What follows are my attempts to characterize the nature of the presence of the special *topoi* in the lectures and discussions of this course as well as the other potential disciplinary values I observed.

TABLE 3.1: Number of appeals to the special *topoi* in lectures and discussions.

	SPEAKERS				
	Professor in Lecture	TAs in Discussion Section	Students in Lecture[4]	Students in Discussion Section[5]	**Total**
TOPOS					
Appearance/reality					
Positive/neutral	46 (72%)	8 (18%)	5 (10%)	20 (35%)	**85**
Negative	6 (17%)				
Ubiquity	17 (45%)	2 (6%)	0	2 (6%)	**21**
Contemptus Mundi	12 (38%)	2 (6%)	0	6 (9%)	**20**
Paradigm	10 (31%)	3 (6%)	0	2 (6%)	**14**
Paradox	1 (3%)	0	0	2 (6%)	**3**

Percentages indicate the number of lectures or discussion sections in which a *topos* was appealed to out of the 29 total lectures or 34 discussion sections I observed.

Appearance/Reality. As Fahnestock and Secor observed in their sample of professional discourse, the appearance/reality *topos* was the most utilized here. A great deal of class time was devoted to attempts to clarify how to employ this *topos* in a manner that corresponds with the overarching value of complexity. The professor began the semester with a pronouncement I would describe as both dramatic and challenging: that unlike in high school, the terms "symbol" and "theme" were to be "outlawed" in this course because they are "responsible for [the] death of minds and

[4] Students spoke during 22 out of the 29 lectures a total of 141 times and averaging 6.4 turns of speech per lecture.
[5] In my incomplete transcriptions of the 34 discussion section meetings I observed, students took 443 turns, averaging 13 turns per discussion section.

mistakes in reading literature. [They] teach that you don't have to read what's there" (1/19/99, p. 3).[6] In his next lecture, the professor explained that the urge to "symbol-hunt," or "interpret," "implies tea leaves" (1/21/99, p. 6). The outlawed terms were described as being used all too often reductively, not with complexity. "A work," he told them, is "clearly more than that, otherwise why not just give [the] theme instead of [a] 400 page work?" (1/21/99, p. 8). The following week the professor asked the students to identify the "one explicit metaphor" (1/26/99, p. 11) in Frost's "After Apple Picking." The first response offered by a student was "death," to which the professor replied, "[That's] not even a word in the poem!" (1/26/99, p. 11). The students then began calling out words and phrases from the poem until stopped by the professor's complaint, "If we keep going, we'll underline every noun. We're calling the poet a liar; I know you said this, but you mean that. Notice how we wanted to take it all to mean something else" (1/26/99, p. 11). Instead he instructed to "stay close, accuracy, think in terms of description, [rather] than interpretation" (1/26/99, p. 12). But then, with a "now we'll make connections" (1/26/99, p. 12), the professor offered a reading of the poem's explicit "pane of glass" metaphor which did invoke the appearance/reality *topos*. He placed a page from Emerson's "Nature" on the overhead projector and pointed to Emerson's use of the term "glass" to mean "mirror" while explaining, "I

[6] All quotations from lectures and class discussions are taken from my field notes (approximately 10,000 words), which are incomplete and rough transcripts of the proceedings. The brackets indicate additions to what appears in my field notes, but to the best of my knowledge I have not added terms that the speakers did not use. The date following the quotation is the date of the lecture, discussion section, or conference the quotation is taken from, and the page numbers following the quotations correspond to the page numbers of my field notes.

think he calls it a pane of glass to make this Emersonian connection. [A] Fall into self-consciousness; [we] suspect our instruments, all those 'I's. That's my reading. Is it close to Frost? I think so. Are there arguments to that? Yeah. But this is what we'll be doing: Make connections and justify them" (1/26/99, pp. 13-14).

Students responded to this instance of the lawmaker apparently breaking his own law in both the lecture meeting and discussion sections with worry over their own misinterpretations and lack of skill, complaint over the difficulty of making such arguments successfully, and even resentment for feeling tricked, though a few students expressed delight in the ensuing fray. One student's dismay carries the sentiment of many of the vocal students: "In high school [we were] taught to read for deeper meaning. It's hard without knowing what he knows about Frost to take it for what it is. It's difficult" (1/26/99, p. 17). This response, tinged with anxiety over the apparent authority and wide reading one must command in order to make appearance/reality claims, seems to indicate that a special *topos* of the field that students thought was familiar and that they were authorized to make claims with was now being narrowed and complicated, in a sense taken away from them. Some also expressed a degree of feeling tricked, as one said in his discussion section, "Didn't he say not to look into it

and then he looks into it?" (1/26/99, p. 17).[7]

Of course, though the professor outlawed "symbol," both the term and concept did sneak into the course, more so when the memory of the controversy of the first few weeks was less fresh. Though the professor used the term "symbol" 13 times in denunciations and outlawing decrees, as the semester progressed, the professor began to infuse his lectures with more of the appearance/reality *topos* while clarifying how to employ this strategy properly. For instance, he indicated that historical accuracy is important to make such claims credible, as in "Young Goodman Brown": "The association of Faith's pink ribbons with innocence is historically inaccurate; in this text pink is associated with happiness." In a neutral, descriptive, or positive manner, I observed the professor use the term "symbol" three times, while terms such as "resonance," "representation," and "association" came to refine the professor's preferred understanding of the appearance/reality *topos*. For instance, after using the phrase "in terms of" to describe a metaphor in H.D.'s in "Oread," "Sea *in terms of*

[7] In response to this draft of this article, the professor indicated he felt my depiction of his treatment of "After Apple Picking" as an example of the application of the appearance/reality *topos* made it appear that he was contradicting himself when in fact his intention was to encourage a reading more accurately described as the application of the paradigm *topos*, a reading that tests the admonition of Frost's "Education by Poetry" to connect text and context by connecting "After Apple Picking" with Emerson's "Nature." Though I agree that his treatment of "After Apple Picking" is also an example of the paradigm *topos*, my observations of their responses to these early lectures suggested to me that to the students his treatment was an application of the appearance/reality *topos* first and paradigm second. In other words, to perform the connection between "Nature" and "After Apple Picking," many students noticed that one first had to recognize that the appearance of "pane of glass" was not all it seemed on the surface. However, I feel it is important to acknowledge his treatment of "After Apple Picking" is an application of the paradigm *topos* too because this allows us to see more clearly the connections to cultural context his readings forged thoughout the semester.

pines" (4/8/99, p. 180), the following discussion of H.D's "Leda," with a reference to an earlier reading by Gilbert and Gubar, transpired:

> **Student 1[8]:** Why a red swan?
>
> **Professor:** [I think] there are red swans. Two sexes. Hell, if [a] pen's a penis, what's this swan? *[laughter]*
>
> **Student 3:** So you weren't looking at it as a metaphor, but then you look at [the] swan as [a] metaphor for [a] penis?
>
> **Professor:** No, no, no. [The] *representation* of [the] swan calls to mind a penis, in the way pines are the sea. [It's] *figured* in terms that are sexual. (4/8/99, pp. 180-182)

Three lectures later, prior to presenting a reading of "A Good Man is Hard to Find" which drew on references to Roman Catholicism and Freud, the professor explicitly announced his tempering of his earlier ban on locating "deeper meaning," (and to my surprise there was no apparent outrage expressed on the students' part):

> **Professor:** Remember way back [when] talking about signs? Signs, signifier, signified only take on meaning in a context; for example in *Pilgrim's Progress* [we're] told hidden meanings [are] most important. We've been working against that for an entire semester, but that will [only] take us so far. We need to begin to take [a] step outside to context

[8] I have tried to accurately indicate different student speakers in each segment of dialogue with different numbers, but at times it was difficult to keep track, particularly in the large lecture hall with over two hundred in attendance. The identifying numbers do not carry over into other segments of quoted dialogue. In other words, "Student 1" is not necessarily the same person in each segment of dialogue.

that needs to be defended, argued, justified as in [your] two page papers. (4/20/99, p. 202)

The "step outside to context" that he presented was cultural and historical, exemplified by the information on art and politics he brought to bear upon the seemingly simple details of Hemingway's *In Our Time*.

However, long before the professor explicitly acknowledged such an appropriate use of the appearance/reality *topos*, students in their discussion sections often "hunted" for symbols despite the ban. In the discussion sections, I observed the TAs use the term "symbol" twice in a positive, neutral, or descriptive manner, and I observed the students use the term twice in a such a way and another two times in the negative, denunciatory manner of the professor. In this example, a student ignores the professor's ban in a discussion of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper":

> **Student 1:** [There are] many heads behind the paper. [I think] she's talking about all women being oppressed.
>
> **Student 2:** Maybe it's different parts of herself…
>
> **Student 3:** This room *symbolizes* the entrapment; I thought that was what the author's intent was… (3/3/99, p. 110)

These observations lead me to believe that many of these students entered the course familiar with the general operation of the appearance/reality *topos*--as one student remarked, " I don't think any literature says what it means" (3/31/99, p. 159)--but unaware of its "proper" use in service of the overarching value of complexity. The professor anticipated this and, with dramatic and attention-grabbing flair, attempted to

have students avoid reductive, symbolic readings, such as "black equals death" (1/28/99, p. 35) because, he said, these readings pay no attention to the cultural underpinnings of the equation. Most certainly they lead to simple equations which negate other possible readings; they appear to solve problems as opposed to raising more problems, and such maneuvers run counter to the values of the professional community of literary scholars.

Paradigm. Setting up surprisingly sophisticated challenges for non-English majors, the design of this course allowed for and encouraged the application of the paradigm *topos*. The reading list often alternated between standard "imaginative" works of literature and essays of critical theory, such as the first chapter of Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*. The professor and the TAs often put these texts into "dialogue" with each other in lectures and discussions, and the professor regularly named theorists such as Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Henry Louis Gates Jr. and introduced their key concepts such as author and reader "functions," ideology, and signifyin(g). For instance, following a lecture on Gilbert and Gubar, the professor explained he read "Young Goodman Brown" as a form of "demonization," with Faith as the "angel/monster" (2/16/99, p. 68). In the same vein, a TA would sometimes try to lead students in discussion to make connections between works of literature and theory: "Let's try to tie this [Anne Bradstreet's "The Prologue"] back to Gilbert and Gubar. [Let's use them as] a frame. To what extent [is the poem] an internalization, or an appeal to her audience?" (Barbara 2/10/99, p. 60). Using theory as a "frame" through which to read a work of literature is precisely the maneuver of the paradigm *topos*. In

one conference, Chandani elucidated for a student the work this maneuver entails as a suggestion for revising her paper: "Take their text [Gilbert and Gubar's] and look at another, read the text through it…. You already know how you're going to read the text, [you're] mapping Gilbert and Gubar on to them…give examples…" (3/4/99, p. 117).

Ubiquity. The ubiquity *topos* appeared in the lectures and discussions of this course in much the same spirit as the professional discourse that Fahnestock and Secor analyzed. For instance, when discussing paper topics and Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil," he offered the following as a sample: "[I] notice 'smile' [is] mentioned 67 times in [the] story. If [I'm] going to understand [the] story, [I] need to understand [that] smile…" (2/18/99, p. 85). When lecturing on Hemingway's *In Our Time*, he made the same connection between ubiquity and importance by asking, "What's important there? In other words, what word gets repeated?" (5/4/99, p. 243). I observed Barbara make a similar association in her question posed to her discussion section, "Where else is a word repeated? What [does this] make [you] think of?" (1/27/99, p. 26). Occasionally a student would verbalize the same connection between ubiquity and significance, as the following student did in her question: "Can you explain 'creeping'? Why [is it] significant? [I] notice she uses it everywhere… creeping in garden, over husband…" (3/3/99, p. 112).

Contemptus Mundi. The *contemptus mundi topos* appeared in a variety of manifestations as the professor tackled such issues as sexism, racism, loss of religious faith, and violence among American youths. The works he selected for the syllabus raised such issues, and his lectures offered connections between these issues and the

students' contemporary experience. The shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado occurred during this semester, and in the lecture following this event the professor reevaluated the trajectory of the issues he had been tracing through the semester and explained his desire to address "identity and identity formation" (4/27/99, p. 224). In this lecture, he paralleled the exclusion and "othering" of the Columbine killers with Ab Snopes of Faulkner's "Barn Burning" and suggested there can be very disastrous effects as a result "of some perception of disparity between some ideal (or idealized) world and the corrupt world of everyday life" (4/27/99, p. 227). An attitude of despair over "the corrupt world of everyday life" expressed by the students in the course was most apparent in their response when Denise asked her discussion section "Is the concept of evil compatible with contemporary life? […is there] a change in [the] way evil [is] talked about in 'The Devil and Irv Cherniske'?":

> **Student 1:** [It] seems there are more things that are evil now than in the seventeenth century.
>
> **Student 2:** We have a lot more excuses today, [but the] same evils.
>
> **Denise:** Yeah, I think that's what [the professor] was getting at…. What is evil?
>
> **Student 3:** Anything not dead… (2/16/99, pp. 73-74)

Paradox. On two occasions I observed a student in discussion point to an apparent paradox, only to have the subject dropped in subsequent discussion. For instance, the following observation during a discussion of "Young Goodman Brown," "The Devil and Tom Walker," and "The Devil and Irv Cherniske" was not explored

further: "What's unusual is that [the] life of Young Goodman Brown, who looked away [from the devil], is as miserable as [the guys in] the other two stories. [The] townspeople hold them in the same regard" (2/17/99, p. 83). However, it's important to note that the apparent paradox the student was pointing to is an incongruity among three works, not a paradox within one text. The other comment approaching the paradox *topos* I observed was, "The duality is really clear on page 186; he thinks of himself as two people" (4/14/99, p. 191). But here the student was clarifying for another student his understanding of the term "double consciousness," a term used in lectures on Emerson and W.E.B Dubois. Perhaps because of its level of difficulty, perhaps because such observations leave little to pursue in argument, or perhaps because the paradox *topos* is the most distinctly "New Critical" of the special *topoi*[9] and thus outmoded, this *topos* was largely absent from the discourse I observed.

Overall Value of Complexity. In their analysis of professional discourse, Fahnestock and Secor "found no articles praising the simplicity of a work, or its transparency, or its uncomplicated optimism, or the ease with which meaning is plucked from its surface" (p. 90). Instead, the critics of their analysis "justify their endeavor by finding complexity in the ways represented by the special *topoi.*" Just as he took great pains to clarify the connection of the appearance/reality *topos* to complexity, the professor of the course I observed emphasized the products of close reading are always more complex than not, whether reading a work of literature or a current tragedy in Littleton, Colorado. Table 3.2 presents a tabulation of the number of times I observed

[9] During our interview at the end of the semester, the professor described the paradox *topos* as highly New Critical and a strategy he would not want his students to use.

terms related to this overall value of complexity employed in the lectures and discussions of this course. I believe these numbers speak to one of the chief functions of the lectures and discussions: to point out the complexities of the text, work to untangle some of those complexities, and ultimately conclude that those complexities cannot be completely reduced.

TABLE 3.2: Number of references to terms related to "complexity."

	SPEAKERS				
	Professor in Lecture	TAs in Discussion Section	Students in Lecture	Students in Discussion Section	**Total**
Complex/ Complexity/ Complicated	30 (59%)	4 (12%)	0	1 (3%)	**35**
Difficult/ Tricky	11 (31%)	3 (9%)	0	1 (3%)[10]	**15**
Ambiguous/ Uncertain	6 (17%)	4 (6%)	0	0	**10**
Problem/ Struggle	5 (10%)	3 (9%)	0	0	**8**
Simple/easy[11]	6 (10%)	1 (3%)	0	4 (12%)	**11**

Percentages indicate the number of lectures or discussion sections in which a term related to "complexity" was appealed to out of the 29 total lectures or 34 discussion sections I observed.

One student's question raised in a discussion section may indicate this student's growing awareness of this function: "He never really came to any concrete conclusion

[10] Unlike the professor and TAs' use of this term, this student's use was in a complaint: "In high school [we were] taught to read for deeper meaning. It's hard without knowing what he knows about Frost to take it for what it is. It's difficult" (1/26/99, p. 17).

[11] The professor and TAs used these terms to explain that a textual feature that seemed simple or easy was in reality not. One of the students used these terms in that same spirit, but the other three used them to declare that some textual feature or act of interpretation actually was easy or simple.

on what [is] going on [in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"] because there isn't really one?" (4/7/99, p. 177). Perhaps this student's growing realization was facilitated by the professor's increasingly explicit announcement of this project. For instance, in his first lecture on *Huckleberry Finn*, the professor announced, "The way I want to set up [this] book is as increasingly [presenting] more and more problems for the reader" (3/23/99, p. 138). He carried this celebration of the complex and uncertain beyond examinations of literature to examinations of the contemporary world around the students. Late in the semester after tracing the issue of race through several works of literature as well as popular music, the professor declared, "It's good there are no definite answers to [the] questions I've been asking. What's great literature? What [does it] mean to be white? Black? [It's] more complicated than [the] '50's Pat Boone and Little Richard" (4/15/99, pp. 198-9). The professor began the course calling into question the very title of the course—the "master" in "Masterworks of American Literature," his first lecture proclaimed, implies "dead white males" (1/19/99, p. 3)--and concluded the course with these last words of his final lecture: "If [you] get anything from this course, I hope it's that the truth [is] complex but worth investigating" (5/6/99, p. 247).

Barbara's advice to her students early in the semester couldn't then have been more appropriate:

> **Barbara:** How many of you are just as confused now as when [you] walked in?
>
> **Student:** Maybe more. [laughter]…

> **Barbara:** Get used to [the] fact [that there's] not just one right answer…. We won't always come to conclusions. Get comfortable with uncertainty. [There's] no one right answer. Certain uncertainties [are] more acceptable than others, [so] go to the text [like the professor] said [and] trace [the] metaphor until [it] breaks down. (1/27/99, p. 26)

And the reaction of one student to Jane Smiley's "Say It Ain't So, Huck" couldn't have been more inappropriate if she was attempting to engage in this disciplinary community's discourse: "Did Mark Twain write *Huckleberry Finn* to analyze racism? I think he *just* wrote a novel. I think [Jane] Smiley's going too far" (3/31/99, p. 161).

Discussion of Paper Assignments. In keeping with the values of the discipline, the professor explained that his instructions for the papers are "purposefully vague" (2/18/99, p. 84) to encourage non-formulaic writing and thinking. However, he did many times point out that his manner of lecturing or that a student's question or observation could serve as a model or starting point for writing the paper assignment. The following exchange, following a student's expressed desire to "read into" the heart which Tom Walker finds in Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker," illustrates this:

> **Professor:** But there's a liver there too! Emblematic value must include both…
>
> **Student 1:** Do they historically have meaning?
>
> **Student 2:** I think [they're] just a heart and a liver.

> **Professor:** Historically [the] liver [is] the seat of emotions, [so] you can do something with [it] then--this is America, you can do anything—but [the] text will tell you if [it's an] emblem. What we are doing now [is] what [you] need to do in [your] paper: first thing go back to [the] text… (2/16/99, p. 70)

After the students handed in their second draft of their first paper, a draft they had the option to revise again before they handed in their second paper, the professor made the somewhat surprising announcement that he had read all the papers that were handed in on time (the TAs were responsible for grading the papers). He also made the following observation: "So many [papers] were 'here's what X means,' so many 'here's what [the] black veil means' despite what I said in lecture [about depending upon] who reads the veil, context, meaning change. [I] said [that] for your benefit" (3/25/99, p. 146). Despite his lectures on the appropriate application of the appearance/reality *topos*, it appears, in the professor's estimation, that many students were sticking with their preconceived "symbol hunting" interpretation strategies in their first paper assignment. Thus he asked the students to consider the following question when revising: "Do you reduce what may be a more complex situation?" (3/30/99, p. 151). He also placed two papers on the overhead projector he described as particularly successful. Both these papers, according to my two raters, engage in the paradigm *topos*. As the professor explained, the paper "Facing Reality" "carefully lays the context in which the story is being read… This person's reading of the story tests out connections to justify this reading" (3/25/99, p.146). Similarly, in a suggestion pushing toward the use of the

paradox *topos*, the professor offered the following guidance when preparing the students to write the essay exam portion of their final exam:

> Weaker answers will *simply* take idea of grotesque and point out its use in two stories. [You're] asked to think about [the] disparity between [the] ideal and corrupt [as] just the beginning point. Think about some relationship between two stories; for example, what one writer finds corrupt may be ideal in another work [is] the best kind of argument…. Take [the] questions and make [them] more specific, more *complex*. (5/4/99, p. 241-2)

Thus at times the professor did specify that the students' writing should strive to appeal to the values of the disciplinary community; however, more often the lectures and particularly the discussion sections I observed treated issues of coherence and mechanics as of primary importance when referring to students' writing. For instance, when the professor placed the second successful student paper on the overhead projector, he called attention to its "interesting introduction to [the] argument, clear, coherent. Compare [it] to 'Hawthorne [is] one of [the] greatest writers of [the] nineteenth century yadda yadda.' [It's] not perfect; [there's] loss of control towards [the] end of [the] paragraph…. Coherence [is] the most important thing to pay attention to" (3/25/99, p. 145).

This view was amplified in the discussion sections. Chandani produced a handout that was distributed in most of the discussion sections following the return of the first draft of the first paper. When Erica distributed this handout to her discussion

section, she described it as "tips if [you're] not familiar with [the] rules of [the] discipline of English" (2/17/99, p. 80). This handout listed some fuller explanations of the kinds of concerns Chandani said she marked on many papers. The list included the need to argue for some assumptions and articulate the importance of the argument; however, the bulk of the list asked students to take care when proofreading, using citations, using terms correctly, and maintaining focus and coherence at the paragraph and sentence level. Other TAs listed these same concerns on the blackboards in their classrooms. Only in one discussion section when examining some anonymous sample student drafts did I observe a TA, Faizah, state that there's a key role for complexity in the students' writing. When comparing two drafts, the TA said, "[This] argument's more *complex* than [the other], a strength" (3/24/99, p. 144).

Habits of Mind. Ultimately, the value-laden nature of the special *topoi* mean that their use serves not only as a way of writing, a method of argumentation, but also marks a way of thinking, perceiving, a "habit of mind" as described by Marion Joan Francoz (1999). This, too, was explicitly referred to during lectures and discussions. What the professor intended the students to see in the lecture format, as he told them in an early lecture, was "how I make meaning" and that the lectures should not be seen as "informational, factual. [You're] learning how, not what, to think…. Most of what I say up here will be provocation, not information. Provoke you to think. The dirty little secret of this course is you have to think" (1/28/99, p. 35). In the following discussion a student expressed he had internalized this concept:

> **Student 1:** I think [the] way we analyze in this class is different from [the] way [we were] taught in high school. Everything they say [there] means something different than [what you] first read. I think we're not overanalyzing here….
>
> **Erica:** Why [does this university] require this course?
>
> **Student 2:** [The university is] different from [the professor]. [the university] wants us to be educated, make you seem [or] look educated….. [The Professor] wants us to have a more analytical mindset, [to] have an understanding not just [to] have read.
>
> **Student 3:** [He] wants us to acquire [the] skill of analyzing in his way. (3/31/99, p. 158-9)

A strong sense that the students were engaged in acquiring "skills" professionals in this field have mastered was apparent in other TA led discussions of the lectures and texts. Representative is Chandani's joking comment in a discussion early in the course in which very vocal concerns over the professor having outlawed "symbol" and "theme" were expressed, "If we knew how to do this already, [we] wouldn't be in school. We'd all be English professors!" (1/26/99. p. 18). Barbara called attention to the levels of training and preparation such professionalization requires by describing steps most of her students will not choose to climb: "Theoretically [your] journal [is] a record of you as reader in this class. Does this mean [you are] a graduate level reader [the] first time [you] come to [a] text? No." (4/21/99, p. 214).

Other Values. Though my initial objective was to determine if the five special *topoi* Fahnestock and Secor had identified in professional discourse played a role in the discourse of this undergraduate class, I began to distinguish values other than complexity repeatedly appealed to in the professor's and TAs' discourse such as individuality, social justice, and the already mentioned coherence and disciplined habits of mind. With the possible exception of coherence, a quality valued in the students' texts but not the texts examined in the course,[12] these other values did not appear to contradict the value of complexity but did seem to shape this overarching value in ways other than the Modernist and New Critical characterization of complexity Fahnestock and Secor provided based on their sample of professional discourse published between 1978 and 1982. The professor reiterated his direction from the syllabus that the essays should be "an individual, not a personal, response to the reading" several times during lectures, and by this it became clearer that he meant to encourage students to acknowledge the effects their gender, race, age, sexuality and/or birthplace may have on their responses and to discourage them from focusing on likes and dislikes without consideration of the cultural context from which these personal opinions arise. I believe this value and the project of the course announced in its description shifted what Fahnestock and Secor playfully named the *contemptus mundi topos* away from a Modernist reveling in the Fall of humankind they noted in the journal articles and towards a desire for social change and justice. In other words, though plenty of contempt for the state of the world was expressed, the contempt often was directed at

[12] The professor made this distinction explicit when lecturing on an essay by Frost. He said there is "a purpose to 'Education by Poetry's lack of coherence" (1/21/99, p.6).

social problems. And because this was a class intended, as the professor said in his first lecture, to "develop a greater critical self-consciousness…[which] makes for citizenry. [We'll] test out prejudices and expectations, [we'll] see how we see. [This is a] basis of democratic citizenship" (1/19/99, p. 3), the attention to problems of racism, sexism, and violence in America suggests a shift from epideictic to deliberative rhetoric, or at least suggested that these are problems the students should prepare to face with contemplation and perhaps action.

It seems likely that Fahnestock and Secor did not note these values of individuality and social justice in their analysis because their sample was drawn just as the profound effects of an influx of theory in translation were beginning to be felt in literary studies. The discipline's value of complexity may have been reshaped to serve different ends since their analysis, and thus I may have observed some more recent values, warrants, and conventions of argumentative discourse shared among the professional community of literary studies in the oral aspects of this undergraduate course. The value of complexity with its attendant "habits of mind" was communicated explicitly and repeatedly during lectures and discussions, though this value was also sometimes orally rejected by some students in comments that suggest they saw a text as "just" meaning one possible interpretation. However, though four of the five special *topoi* were clearly applied to texts and used as warrants to support oral claims made about the readings, their use was subtle, unannounced. Of course, that a warrant be unstated and assumed is not only common but also effective when the audience the

claim is appealed to already accepts the warrant's value. Yet in this course, that relationship between speaker and audience is clearly not in place.

Analysis of Student Texts:

Results of Raters' Analysis. The independent raters found the special *topoi* of literary criticism to be present in a sample of the students' final drafts. When disregarding their classification of a *topos* as primary, secondary, or tertiary and looking at their agreement in the loosest sense, the two raters agreed in 21 out of the 23 papers (91% agreement) on the presence of a special *topos*. That the raters saw at least one special *topos* in all the papers (and often times they saw secondary and tertiary *topoi*) was in all likelihood encouraged by my asking them to seek for them (though I did indicate to them--and provide a coding option for--the possibility that a paper did not to employ any of the *topoi*). In a much stricter sense, the raters agreed in 12 out of the 23 papers on the designation of a particular special *topos* as the primary *topos* employed (52% agreement). Of these 12 papers, the raters determined four primarily utilized the appearance/reality *topos*, three the ubiquity *topos*, three the paradigm *topos*, and two the *contemptus mundi topos*. The grades for these papers ranged from failing to A-.

An overall score of effectiveness for each paper's use of its primary special *topos* was calculated by averaging the raters' responses to the four evaluative criteria. The mean of both raters' scores for each paper served as an overall score of effectiveness. Using the strict designation of a primary *topos* at use in the sub-sample of 12 papers, I conducted a one-way analysis of variance to determine if students were particularly effective at one *topos* over others. There was no main effect of *topos* on

overall evaluation scores [$F(3,8)=2.6, p=.12$]. There was also no significant effect of *topos* choice on grade earned on papers [$F(3,8)=1.1$, $p=.387$]. This may mean that the student writers whose papers the TAs graded highly did not gravitate towards what could be considered a more sophisticated and harder to execute *topos*, the paradigm *topos*, or it could also mean that employing a particular *topos* such as the paradigm or *contemptus mundi topos* does not automatically insure that a TA will give the paper a higher grade.

To push further for possible effects of *topos*, I isolated the "complexity" criterion to determine a mean "complexity" score for each of the twelve papers, and performed another analysis of variance. These mean scores can be seen in Table 3.3. There was a significant difference across "complexity" scores for the four *topoi* [$F(3,8)=11.689$, $p<.003$]. Post hoc tests indicated the "complexity" scores for the use of the appearance/reality and paradigm *topoi* are significantly higher than the "complexity" scores the raters assigned for the use of the ubiquity and *contemptus mundi topoi* [$p<.05$]. Though this may indicate that the student writers who employed the appearance/reality and paradigm *topoi* used them more in service of the value of complexity than the writers who used other *topoi*, another possible understanding of these results may be that the raters preferred the paradigm and appearance/reality *topoi* to the other *topoi*.

Table 3.3: Average overall and complexity special *topos* evaluative scores and grades for a sample of 12 students' final drafts.

Primary Special *Topos* (rater determined)	**Mean Overall *Topos* Effectiveness Score** (rater assigned)	**Mean *Topos* Complexity Score** (rater assigned)	**Mean Grade** (TA assigned for the paper)
paradigm (n=3)	3.4 (0.4)	3.3 (0.3)	3.1 (0.5)
appearance/reality (n=4)	3.3 (0.3)	3.5 (0.0)	1.9 (1.9)
contemptus mundi (n=2)	2.9 (0.2)	2.0 (0.7)	3.2 (0.4)
ubiquity (n=3)	2.8 (0.5)	2.0 (0.5)	2.1 (0.5)
paradox (n=0)	---	---	---

The raters used a four-point Likert scale, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree. The TAs used a four-point letter grading scale with + and - grades, which I converted into its numeric equivalent, and often (five times in this sample of 12 papers) the TAs assigned a "split" grade, such as "B-/C+." In the cases of such split grades, I used the mean of both grades to calculate one numeric grade for each paper.

Discussion of Raters' Analysis. These results are difficult to interpret with any certainty due to a variety of factors. The number of papers in this sample is small, though this sample does represent a range of grades from F to A and a range of all the special *topoi* (with the exception of the paradox *topos* which the raters did not identify in any of the larger sample of 23 papers). It's also worth remembering that the mean grades of this sample are means of grades given by six different TAs, each perhaps using slightly distinct grading criteria. Another study focusing on textual analysis and gathering a larger sample is needed before we dismiss as insignificant differences in the effective use of the special *topoi* and differences in evaluations made by those who

grade the students' performance. Nonetheless, a paper's grade and the evaluative score the raters assigned the primary *topos* could be measures independent from each other. Grades could be affected more by the criteria the professor and TAs explicitly stated to the students, such as coherence and length, or still other largely unstated factors such as style or grammar.

Qualitative Textual Analysis. My qualitative analysis of the TAs' between drafts feedback and the students' negotiations and revisions indicates that students often invoked one or more of the special *topoi*, and TAs sometimes encouraged their use. What follows is my attempt, informed by the interviews I conducted with five of the student writers, to describe the presence of the *topoi* in the students' drafts and TA commentary.

Some students employed special *topoi* in ways incongruent with the value of complexity. In one paper, which received a C- and a raters' "complexity" score of 1.5, the student used the ubiquity *topos* to argue, as he states in the paper's first sentence, "The Devil and Irv Cherniske [sic] is a story about a man who looses [sic] his wife and family, all because of his greed for a superficial happiness." The body of his less than 1 1/2-page paper then points to moments in the text of the story that T. Coraghesan Boyle's character Irv Cherniske expresses unconcern for those near to him in his pursuit of wealth. Erica's comments on this final draft state that while this draft is "much more clearly written. Your argument still needs to be more patient, providing demonstrations and proof for the assertions you make." These comments on clarity and the need for

evidence are then followed with what I see as a call to investigate this story in more complex ways:

> Push your argument--could you explore why it is that he is not close to his family and his children--are children just more property to him? Does he ever have a close relationship w/ his family, kids, or neighbors? Why is he (Irv) "wrapped up in extreme material wealth"? Is he alone in this condition? You say that Irv @ the end "loses" his wife and kids, but did he ever "have" them in the emotional sense?

In an earlier draft, the paper began with, "T. Corghesan [sic] Boyle makes it perfectly clear that happiness does not stem from material wealth." Erica, in a comment located at the end of the paper, wrote, "return to your opening ¶ and it [sic] thesis statement--what did you say there that you failed to establish in your paper?" In the revised draft the student not only chose not to generalize Irv Cherniske's behavior, he also decided to delete the phrase "T. Corghesan Boyle makes it perfectly clear." Likewise, also missing from his final draft are the phrases, "On page 168 Boyle makes it ever so clear again" and "It is clear that Boyle is showing us." However, even though this student eliminated from his final draft these phrases that profess the clarity of the story under examination, phrases that seem to suggest the student writer sees no need to undertake an argument, his revision, as Erica's comments on the final draft and the rater's low "complexity" evaluation attest, does not seem to "push" beyond a rather surface and straightforward reading of the story. It's impossible for me to speculate what motivated the student to delete these "it's perfectly clear" phrases that peppered his earlier draft;

Erica's written feedback did not directly address them. But whatever motivated him, I think we see in his revision a surface change only; the final draft employs the ubiquity *topos* in the same "it's perfectly clear" spirit, pointing to examples of a clearly self-serving character's self-serving behavior.

Within this sample of papers are further examples of students using the special *topoi* reductively; however in some cases the lack of complexity did not appear to significantly affect the paper's grade. For instance, another paper that similarly received a low "complexity" score of 1.5 for its use of the *contemptus mundi topos*, received a much higher final grade, a B+. This student's thesis, "Irving's tale ['The Devil and Tom Walker'] is presenting the exact same moral and ethic [sic] dilemma's as Boyle's ['The Devil and Irv Cherniske']. In other words, Boyle's story is the same story of [sic] Irving's, just presented in a different time frame," appeared exactly the same in both his first and final drafts. Denise's feedback, written on the end of the second page of his first draft, stresses exigency and suggests he look for differences that would present a challenge to his uncomplicated and obvious claim:

> I'm not sure why your argument that the stories are the same is important. I'm not saying that it isn't, just that you need to make the reasons more clear. What do you make of the differences between the stories? You want to work towards moving beyond statements of fact.

His final draft, however, shows no evidence that he explored any subtle differences between the two stories. Instead, he seems to have focused what few revisions he made (the bulk of the two drafts are largely the same word-for-word, including typos) on

Denise's request that he explicitly state the exigency behind his argument. Typical of the seven minor rewordings and additions he made to his final draft is the insertion of the following before the first paragraph's last sentence: "Why is this important? Because it reveals a lot about human nature and some of the instincts we as a whole cannot seem to change." Despite his lack of treatment of Denise's question asking him to explore subtle differences, Denise's comments written at the end of his final draft focus on unspecified word choices and undefined style: "You've done a pretty good job of revising here. You could 'clean up' the paper even more by looking closely at your word choices and style. Think about how you could make your argument even more forceful." Denise's inconsistent feedback did not go unnoticed by the student, as he told me, "I didn't think she liked the first draft too much, but then I got my second one back and you know she seemed to really like it a lot more, and personally I don't think I changed it very much, but I guess she liked it." In this case, it seems the TA did not follow through with holding the student to the standard of complexity her feedback on his first draft suggested with its call for an exploration of subtle differences. Instead, her comments on the final draft suggest that the clarity of this student's writing contributed more to its evaluation.

In contrast to the papers within the sample that did not appeal to the value of complexity are papers that did invoke the special *topoi* to argue for the subtleties and complexities of a work. Some students employed this strategy successfully with no explicit instruction apparent in the TA's feedback. The revision process of the paper "Facing Reality," for example, which the professor displayed on the overhead projector

during a lecture as a successful example of student writing, demonstrates a student's ability to independently interpret implicit instruction in the special *topoi*. Erica assigned this final draft a A-/B+, and the raters gave its application of the paradigm *topos* an overall evaluative score of 3.5 and a "complexity" score of 3.5. Erica's comments at the end of the student's first draft on Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil" state that she had "about three arguments going on here and you have to pick b/w them and argue one." For her final draft, she chose to focus on what was one of the arguments in her earlier draft, "Mr. Hooper and his black veil represent the result of sin, separation from God," a pretty straightforward appearance/reality claim. To argue this claim, she applied the paradigm *topos* in her revision work. She opened her paper with the paradigmatic "frame" of a discussion of "three different aspects of death" that she credited to "Ron Tewson, the author of 'Outreach--A blueprint for effective personal evangelism.'" In addition to the comments on narrowing her argument's scope that I have already described, the feedback on her first draft urged her to use proper MLA citations, forge greater coherence between paragraphs, and asked, "Do you need to make all these biblical ref. to make your point? Or are they distracting?" The student seems to have wholeheartedly taken the advice on narrowing the scope of her argument to the one appearance/reality claim but to have forged ahead with her use of biblical references and an argument she explained to me she saw as defying the professor's reading of the story. Apparently this student used the paradigm *topos* without being explicitly instructed by Erica in how to apply it to her particular argument. But as my observations of the professor's lectures indicate, this

student was in a class environment that fostered its use, and perhaps she had already encountered this *topos* earlier in her education. As Erica indicated on her final draft, "I like what you have going here--a sophisticated theological reading of the text," and the professor in his holding this paper up as a model, this student's application of a paradigmatic frame impressed her audience of literary scholars. Her use of the appearance/reality *topos* may have run against the professor's "ban on symbols," but her argumentation through the paradigm *topos* appears to have been an effective counter maneuver, giving the reading of the symbol a context much like the professor's reading of a metaphor in Frost's "After Apple Picking" through Emerson.

Through we have seen invitations to instruction in the use of a special *topos* in the service of complexity turned down by the students who wrote reductive arguments, there are also within this sample of papers examples of students applying a TA's explicit instruction in the use of the special *topoi*. Chandani's written feedback provided explicit instruction in the use of three of the special *topoi*, although in two cases this feedback was written on the final drafts of the students' papers which received a B- and a B+, so subsequently the student writers did not apply this feedback in any revision. However, when Chandani offered explicit instruction in the application of the appearance/reality *topos* in the written feedback a student received on his rough draft, the student took up the invitation. His final draft received an A-, and the raters gave its use of the appearance/reality *topos* an overall evaluative score of 3.5 and a "complexity" score of 3.5. For his first draft, this student stated his argument in his opening paragraph: "Through the poem 'The Prologue', Anne Bradstreet expresses her

frustration towards the opinion of women's writings in the male-dominated field of authorship…. Bradstreet's frustration comes out in her sarcastic tone throughout the poem when talking about her own writing ability and the putative superiority of the men around her." Chandani's feedback, written on the back of the final page of the paper, points to a distinction between "sarcasm" and a "mask of humility" the student's paper did not make:

> You make some very fine observations in this essay. I'm unpersuaded by your claim of sarcasm--what is sarcasm? how do you see it in Bradstreet? What you were arguing more effectively was that Bradstreet adopts a mask of humility in order to publish her poem but we realize through her words that it's only a mask to cover her frustration. And, as you point out in ¶ 4, even her mask slips to reveal her frustration overtly.
>
> I think you've read Bradstreet very thoughtfully and intelligently, but "sarcasm" is difficult to prove & such a strong word. Flesh out your thoughts & avoid repetition and I think you'll have an excellent paper.

In this first draft the student used the terms "sarcasm" and "sarcastic" a total of 14 times; however, he didn't use the term "mask" at all, even in the fourth paragraph (a paragraph that does contain the term "sarcasm" five times). Chandani's introduction of this term and questioning of the term "sarcasm" seems to have influenced his revision decisions greatly, so much so that in his final draft he only uses "sarcasm" or "sarcastic" four times, while throughout his paper he newly introduces the terms "mask,"

"unmasked," "masking… behind the front," "cloaked," "guise," "façade," and "hides," for a total use of nine times. The title of his revised paper, "Unrefined Ore: The Mask of Anne Bradstreet," speaks to how thoroughly the student appears to have shifted towards the concept of a "mask" and away from the formerly central concept of "sarcasm." When I asked him about his revision process, he described the following:

> She [Chandani] came back after reading my first paper and said that my thesis statement and my paper were not in line necessarily completely but that it was a really good paper and there was good evidence there but that my thesis should actually be something more like this, and um so I changed my thesis and you know of course those changes rippled throughout my paper…

The transformations of each "sarcasm" into "mask" or a synonym appear to be the changes that "rippled throughout" his revised draft, and yet his discussion with me indicates that he never felt such changes altered his original main idea, as he said, "Actually what she [Chandani] wrote as my new thesis statement which she gleaned out of my paper already so it was something I had already written." Another way to describe this is to say the student was able to maintain his original argument while his revised draft more thoroughly and centrally employs the appearance/reality *topos* in a manner that he recognized satisfied his audience. He engaged the conventions of a discourse community to persuade one of its members.

II. Students' Perceptions

The interviews and observations of classroom discourse I conducted as part of my qualitative analysis were a revealing but limited way to gauge this large number of students' perceptions of literary studies as a disciplinary discourse community. I used two questionnaires to elicit their understandings of the purpose of their papers in this class and to solicit their opinion of the appropriateness of different writing about literature strategies in the context of their class.

Method

Questionnaires:

I distributed two closed-ended questionnaires to the participating students enrolled in the undergraduate literature course. The first questionnaire, the Purpose Questionnaire, was modeled closely on the surveys Herrington (1985, 1988) gave the chemical engineering and literature students of her studies. The questionnaire asked for responses to statements identifying perceptions of purpose for the paper assignment on a four-point Likert scale (see Appendix B). It was distributed twice during the semester, on the days students handed in paper assignments in the lecture hall.

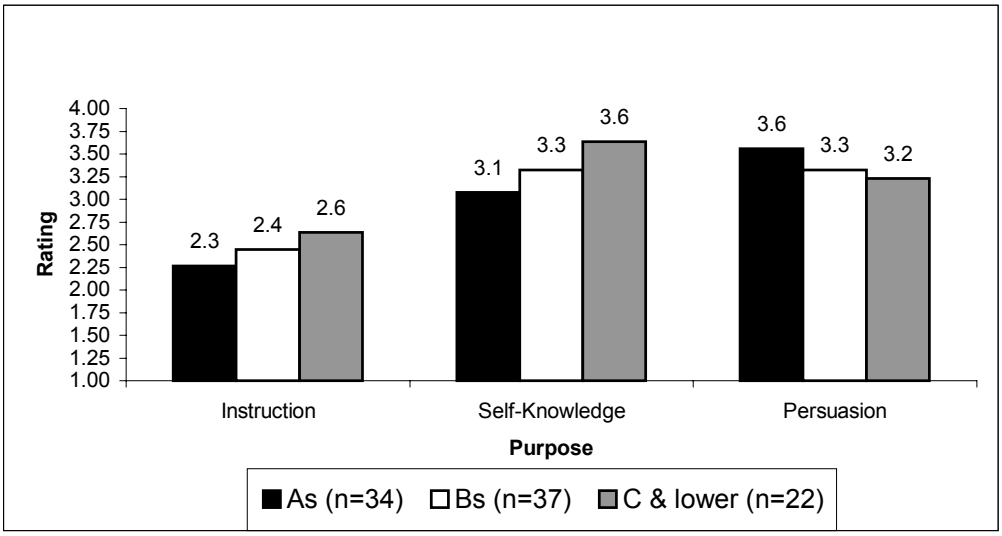
The second questionnaire, the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire, was distributed late in the semester in the 12 discussion sections. This questionnaire investigated whether students recognized four special *topoi* as literary arguments of the kind they were to make in this course. Respondents rated eight excerpts from a variety of published works on a four-point Likert scale for the likelihood that the passages are from

arguments about literature (see Appendix C). Two of the passages were from *Cliff's Notes* summary sections, two from a text on linguistic approaches to studying literature, and four from literary criticism published in major journals. These last four were the passages that Fahnestock and Secor (1991) used to illustrate the special *topoi* of appearance/reality, *contemptus mundi*, paradigm, and ubiquity. I also gave this questionnaire, slightly modified, to a group of 16 English graduate students (I asked them how likely the passages were to be from published works of literary criticism). To investigate the effect one semester of Masterworks of American Literature may have had on the responses to the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire, the same questionnaire was administered to 114 students in six discussion sections of another professor's version of the course in the first weeks of the Fall 2000 semester (six questionnaires with incomplete responses were discarded).

Results

Students' Perceptions of Purpose. An initial principal component analysis indicated that the six possible writing purposes provided on the questionnaire could be combined into three variables, persuasion, self-knowledge, and instruction. These three purposes were rated significantly differently as indicated by a within-subjects multivariate ANOVA [$F(2,89)=55.1$, $p<.001$]. Persuasion and self-knowledge were perceived equally as the main purpose and significantly more strongly than instruction [$p<.001$].

FIGURE 3.1: Results of the Purpose Questionnaire: Average student ratings of perceived purposes for their paper assignments.



To see if students who performed better in the class overall were also more likely to see persuasion as the main purpose of their papers, I grouped students' responses by their final grade in the course and calculated mean responses to the survey. The means for each group are presented in Figure 1. Students at different grade levels were equally willing to give high and low scores, so there was no main effect of grade [$p<.262$]. As in the combined analysis, the differences among purposes were significant: Instruction was the least highly rated purpose, Self-knowledge was intermediate, and persuasion was highest rated [$p<.001$]. The interesting result is a significant interaction between perceived purpose and final course grade [$F(2,92)=5.1$, $p<.008$]. Students who earned As in the course gave significantly lower responses to

Self-knowledge than the students who earned a grade of C or lower. B students did not distinguish significantly between Self-knowledge and Persuasion. For C students, the highest rated purpose was Self-knowledge, significantly higher than Persuasion. These results suggest that students who earned an A in the course clearly viewed their primary purpose in writing their paper as persuasive. B students considered persuasion and display of self-knowledge to be equally important purposes. However, C students considered demonstration and exploration of self-knowledge to be the primary purpose of their papers, significantly more so than persuasion. It appears that C students did not notice or fully understand how to apply the cues in the syllabus and lectures describing the papers as arguments. Not recognizing persuasion as a goal, they were less successful at this persuasion task.

When Herrington (1988) administered the same questionnaire to a small literature course intended to introduce English majors to the field, the professor and students (n=34) rated "exploring one's own ideas" the highest, but with "proving," "convincing," and "demonstrating" close behind. However, Herrington did not analyze her data according to grades received. It may be that different courses have different emphases. Or it may be that those who were most successful in both courses recognized that what exploration of ideas occurs in a paper needs to be conducted before an audience with effective strategies of argument brought to bear on any conclusions.

Special *Topoi*. Table 3.4 presents the mean responses to the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire as well as the mean responses from 16 graduate students in English, and

Figure 3.2 plots the combined results. Students were generally successful at recognizing literary arguments, as a multivariate within-subjects ANOVA indicated [$F(2,150)=127.4$, $p<.001$]. Students rated the samples of literary criticism as significantly more likely to be literary argument than linguistics passages, which were rated significantly higher than the *Cliff's Notes* passages [$p<.001$ for all comparisons]. A test of between-subjects effects indicated a significant effect for grade [$F(3,151)=3.8$, $p<.012$]. Graduate student respondents gave significantly higher ratings than the students who earned Bs and Cs in the course [$p<.001$], but their ratings were not significantly different from the students who earned As in the course. A significant interaction emerged between responses to the passages and final grade in the course [$F(6,300)=2.8$, $p<.012$]. Paired samples tests indicate that students who earned Cs or lower in the course, did not distinguish between the linguistics passages and literary criticism passages, but did rate these higher than the *Cliff's Notes* passages. Finally, a separate ANOVA investigated variance among the responses to the passages of literary criticism [$F(3,151)=8.8$, $p<.001$]. Post hoc comparisons indicate that graduate students rated the passages from literary criticism significantly higher than the undergraduate respondents did [$p<.001$]. Among the special *topoi* passages, the graduate students responses to the passages exemplifying appearance/reality, paradigm, and *contemptus mundi* differed significantly from each other [$p<.05$]. Students who earned As in the course provided significantly higher responses to the special *topoi* passages than students who earned Cs or lower [$p<.001$], but their responses among these passages did not significantly vary.

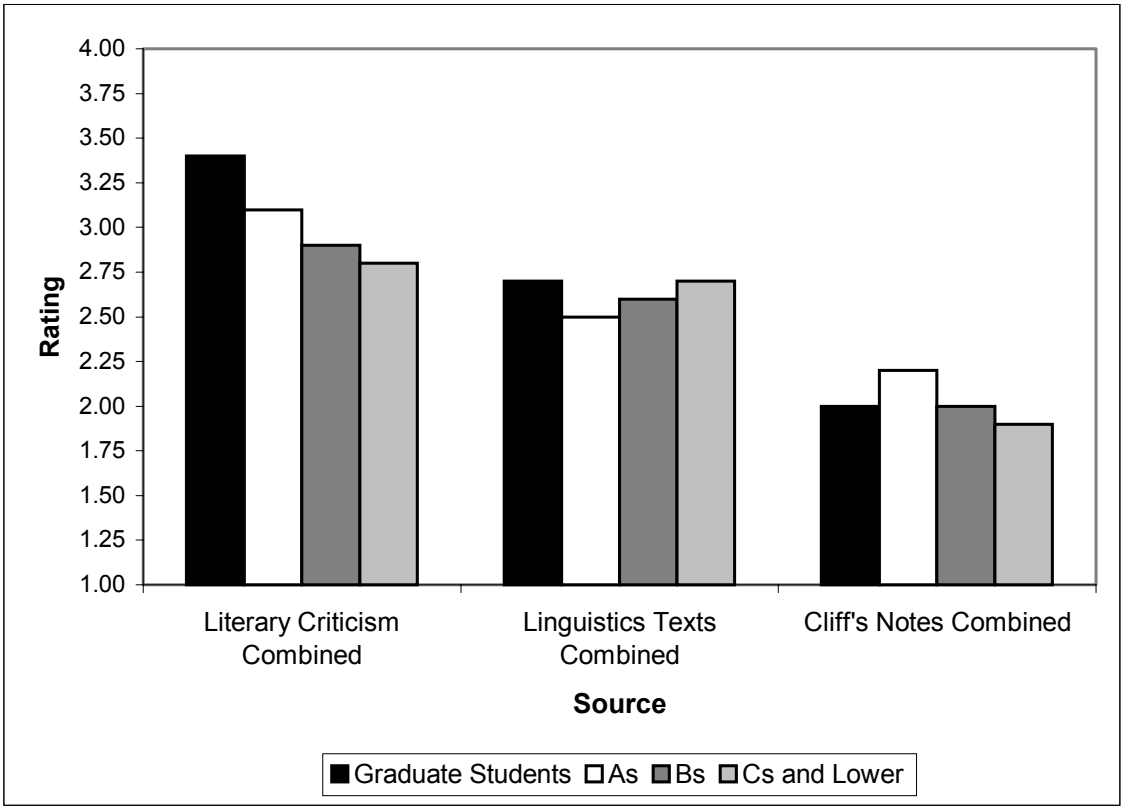
Table 3.4: Results of Special *Topoi* Questionnaire: Average student ratings of likelihood each passage is from an *argument* about literature.

	Total (n=155)[13]	Students Divided by Final Course Grade: Graduate Students (n=16)	As (n=49)	Bs (n=65)	Cs and Lower (n=25)
Passage extracted from:					
Literary Criticism					
• appearance/reality	**3.1**	3.8	3.2	3.0	2.8
	(0.8)	(0.6)	(0.7)	(0.9)	(0.8)
• ubiquity	**3.1**	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.9
	(0.8)	(0.7)	(0.7)	(0.9)	(0.8)
• paradigm	**3.0**	3.5	3.1	2.9	2.8
	(0.7)	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.6)	(0.7)
• *contemptus mundi*	**2.9**	2.9	3.2	2.8	2.8
	(0.8)	(1.0)	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.8)
Combined	**3.0**	**3.4**	**3.1**	**2.9**	**2.8**
	(0.5)	**(0.4)**	**(0.4)**	**(0.4)**	**(0.4)**
Linguistics Texts	**2.6**	**2.7**	**2.5**	**2.6**	**2.7**
	(0.6)	**(0.7)**	**(0.7)**	**(0.6)**	**(0.5)**
Cliff's Notes	**2.0**	**2.0**	**2.2**	**2.0**	**1.9**
	(0.6)	**(0.7)**	**(0.6)**	**(0.7)**	**(0.6)**

Four-point Likert scale response: 1=definitely not from an argument, 2=unlikely to be from an argument, 3=likely to be from an argument, 4=definitely from an argument

[13] I disregarded six incomplete surveys.

FIGURE 3.2: Results of the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire: Average student ratings of likelihood each type of passage is from an argument about literature.



Students at the beginning of the Fall 2000 Masterworks of American Literature course were also generally successful at recognizing literary arguments, as a Within-Subjects MANOVA indicated [$F(2,101)=8.6$, $p<.001$]. Students rated the samples of literary criticism as significantly more likely to be literary argument than *Cliff's Notes* passages [$p<.01$], which were rated significantly lower than the linguistics passages [$p<.001$]; however, this time no significant difference emerged between the responses to

the linguistics and literary passages. Figure 3.3 presents the mean responses to all 8 items on the questionnaire by the students in end of the Spring 1999 and beginning of the Fall 2000. A oneway ANOVA indicated that the first linguistics question [$F(1, 252)=4.2$, $p<.04$] and question six, the paradigm example from literary argument, [$F(1,252)=6.2$, $p<.01$] were significantly different from the responses of the Spring 1999 students. Students who had completed the course in Spring 1999 were more likely than the students who had only just begun the course in the Fall 2000 to reject the linguistics passage (Spring 1999 average = 2.7, Fall 2000 average = 2.9) and to accept the paradigm passage (Spring 1999 average = 2.9, Fall 2000 average = 2.7). When responses to the linguistics, Cliff's Notes, and literary passages were combined (Figure 3.4), no significant differences between the Spring 1999 and Fall 2000 students' responses emerged from a oneway ANOVA. Thus, though those students who had completed the course did make "improved" distinctions on two questionnaire items, it seems reasonable to assume that students enter the E 316K course with skills to detect differences and disciplinary appropriateness among these representative passages.

FIGURE 3.3. Results of the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire: Average student ratings of the likelihood each passage is from an argument about literature. Students were asked to make these ratings at the beginning of the Fall 2000 semester and the end of the Spring 1999 semester.

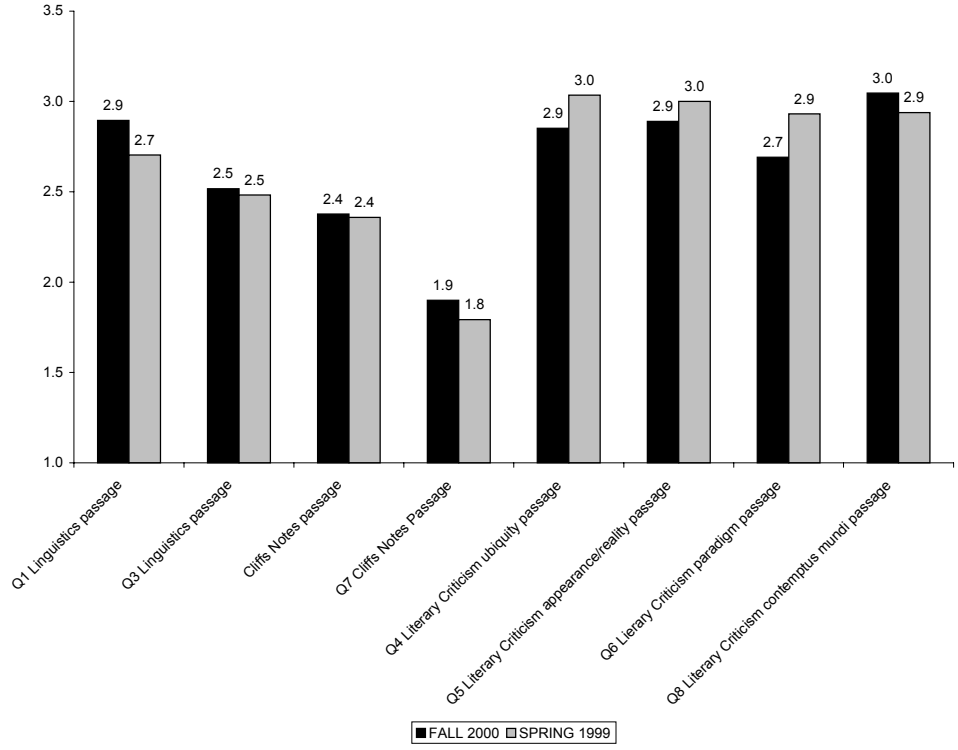
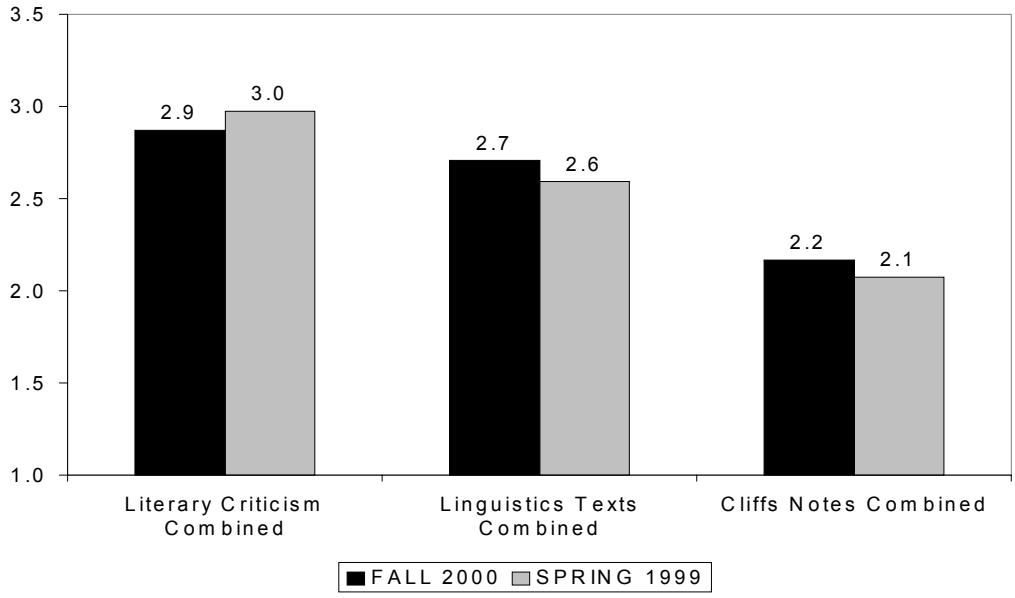


FIGURE 3.4. Results of the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire: Average student ratings of the likelihood each type of passage is from an argument about literature. Students were asked to make these ratings at the beginning of the Fall 2000 semester and the end of the Spring 1999 semester.



Discussion of Special *Topoi* Survey Results. The apparent aptitude of the undergraduate respondents, most of whom are majoring in subjects other than English, to make distinctions among passages from texts written for the professional discourse communities of literary studies and linguistics is striking. One of the passages from the linguistics text even contained the term "argue" to describe the author of the passage's intent, and yet respondents, especially those who earned an A in the course, rated the linguistics passages to be less likely to be from an argument about literature than the passages exemplifying the special *topoi* of literary criticism. Of course I cannot make any claims that the respondents recognized the special *topoi* in these passages; linguistic cues other than the appearance/reality, ubiquity, *contemptus mundi*, or paradigm claims that Fahnestock and Secor saw in these passages of literary criticism may very well

have led respondents to classify some passages as likely to be from literary arguments and some not. Though the results of this survey suggest that students can recognize literary argument as distinct from other types of argument, they do not clarify which aspects of the course or the students' past experience contributed to this recognition. In fact, the almost equally successful responses of students at the start of the course in the Fall 2000 suggests that students' past experience contributes a great deal to this ability.

I shared the results of the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire with the professor and the TAs in separate, taped discussions after the semester concluded. These meetings were the first time I shared and discussed with the professor and TAs Fahnestock and Secor's classification of the five special *topoi* of literary criticism and my reasoning behind my construction of this questionnaire. One of the professor's responses was,

> I think you can argue in terms of ideas of textual power or doing things with a text, these [the special *topoi*] are the ones [of the passages provided in the questionnaire] that do things with them [texts], so that would be then a nice result; they recognize that this is what I'm supposed to do, I'm supposed to do something with this, not simply kind of say what's happening or make some kind of statistical [linguistic analysis].

This view of the use of the special *topoi* as tools is a view Fahnestock and Secor acknowledge, "From one point of view the special *topoi* are the *logos* of literary arguments and are thus the very constructs which enable scholars to operate on literature" (1991, p. 91).

Yet the professor indicated he disliked the idea that these tools are specific to a discipline. He, like many other instructors of courses required of non-majors, takes

great care to make his course relevant to the mostly non-English majors enrolled in it. Because of this care, he said that "it would be important to me that these [the special *topoi*] not be distinctive. It would be bad for me if these were, say, highly distinctive of literary critical arguments but that you don't really find this form of argumentation outside of literary criticism." He indicated that one of his goals in this course is to teach students "to argue," as if the successful rhetorical strategies for one situation and audience could be wholesale transferred to other situations and audiences. But Fahnestock and Secor argue, in addition to serving as tools to act on texts, special *topoi* can be seen "from a rhetorical point of view" as the locus of "the interaction between arguer and audience, between *logos* and *ethos*," and thus to invoke the special *topoi* of literary criticism is "to announce one's membership in the community of literary scholars who in turn will listen most attentively to the speaker with such credentials" (1991, p. 91). It might be unlikely for students to find the same argumentative strategies and stances across all the disciplines they encounter in their coursework. Though perhaps these special *topoi* may be used in other disciplines within the liberal arts, rhetorical styles have been found to differ among disciplines in the humanities. For instance, MacDonald (1992, 1994) found that professional discourse by historians was significantly less particularistic and more apt to assign agency to generalized categories of groups than professional discourse by literary scholars. This professor clearly desires to help students develop thinking, reading, and writing skills that will be relevant to them beyond their coursework for his class, and my observations lead me to believe that he is highly successful at presenting challenging readings and provoking

thoughtful discussions. However, introducing non-English major students to the tools to argue (and think) like a member of the discourse community of literary studies need not be viewed as necessarily "bad." Distinguishing professional discourse and student discourse, the professor stated, "It would be important, I think, to see in their writing… is it a kind of standard literary appearance/reality or is it 'I thought it was this and it turned out to be that' in terms of their own reading." Yet in my understanding of the appearance/reality *topos*, an argument proceeding from "I thought it was this and it turned out to be that" would be engaging in this *topos* in a spirit in accord with the professional discourse. Fahnestock and Secor explain that in literary studies "more recently the locus of complexity has moved either to an interaction between the reader and the text or to the reader alone" (p. 90-1), and thus this professor may be presenting the special *topos* in rather current and "cutting edge" permutations to students.

Conclusion

The first question I posed as a guide to my research, "Are the special *topoi* of the professional practitioners of literary analysis and their attendant value of complexity, as identified by Fahnestock and Secor, present in the discourse of an undergraduate course?" I feel I can answer strongly, in this case, yes. The larger value of complexity that the use of the special *topoi* speaks to was made quite explicit to students, particularly in lectures. Though I observed the professor and TAs employ four of the five special *topoi* in lectures and discussions, their use as warrants was not made explicit. This is understandable; practitioners in the field so often acquire these

assumptions tacitly in an academic environment steeped in their use. As warrants are so often effectively used with an audience that shares their assumed value, the special *topoi* of literary criticism were used to make claims about texts without the backing needed to support their use with a more diverse audience. However, rhetorical analyses such as Fahnestock and Secor's allow practitioners to step outside of their habitual discourse and see it from an "outsider's" view, which is also so often the view of a student, whether a novice or a non-major. If some students "aren't getting it," as the TAs occasionally complained, it may be because some students adhere to values in opposition to the value of complexity. Scientific discourse communities, for instance, tend to value simplicity, and students pursuing degrees in this field may already firmly hold this value. In a similar vein, Davida, Charney, John Newman, and Mike Palmquist (1995) found that epistemological styles vary across disciplines with, for example, students in the humanities being significantly less absolutist than students studying business. This could create conflicts unique in a course intended for non-majors. A tendency to reduce complexity could be an understandable response of a student adhering to a more absolutist epistemological style.

The second guiding question, "When writing and revising do students acknowledge and appeal to these special *topoi*?" can also be answered with a strong yes. In my perception, the author of "Facing Reality" appeared either remarkably adept at responding to implicit instruction or well-versed in these strategies prior to taking this course. Certainly her motivation to succeed in the course could contribute to her proficiency for responding to such implicit writing instruction (I noticed she attended

lectures regularly and sat near the front of the lecture hall), but the author of "Unrefined Ore: The Mask of Anne Bradstreet" appeared to me to be equally, if not more so, motivated. His successful response to his TA's explicit instruction in the use of the appearance/reality *topos* suggests that these special *topoi* can be taught as both tools for working with texts and as effective rhetorical connections to an undeniably discipline-specific audience. Yet, as the students who did not take up their TAs' guidance in applying the special *topoi* remind us, explicit instruction can be rejected.

Though the student who maintained the tenor of his "it's perfectly clear" judgment throughout his revised final draft received a low grade (C-) for the paper, I cannot answer the third question that guided my research, "Do these special *topoi* influence evaluation of student writing?", with as an affirmative answer as I did the first two guiding questions. My analysis of a TA-selected sample of student papers did not find a significant relationship between grades and application of the special *topoi*, though I would like to see this analysis repeated with a larger sample. Instead, other criteria may have played a more important role in grading. Certainly coherence was a concern raised in lectures and reinforced in discussion sections. However, I wonder if simply stating "complexity" and "coherence" are valued in a course is enough to equip students with the tools to achieve these abstract ideals concretely in their writing. I think it's also worth asking whether coherence is so important that it should be "rewarded" even when the coherent argument is also a reductive argument, such as the student who argued that "The Devil and Tom Walker" and "The Devil and Irv Cherniske" are similar stories and received a B+. Of course, any discussion of the

evaluation of student performance in this course is complicated by the realities of a large lecture course in which six different TAs are responsible for grading. Other studies (Nelson, 1990) have reported severe disconnects in the professor's view of the purposes and goals of an assignment and the TA's. However, I believe that in this case there was a great deal of agreement between professor and TAs on issues of evaluation facilitated by the weekly "Teaching Masterworks in American Literature" course.[1]

The results of the Special *Topoi* Questionnaire indicating that students, especially those who earned As in the course, rated as more likely to be from an argument about literature passages exemplifying the special *topoi* suggest students can distinguish arguments from the field of literary studies and the field of linguistics as well as conventions of arguments about literature and summaries of literature. Introducing the special *topoi* as disciplinary tools, just as this professor introduced a piece by Gilbert and Gubar (a fine example of the use of the ubiquity *topos* itself) as a disciplinary work, might equip students with *ways* to write about the texts which are the subject of this discipline (much like biology labs which teach methodologies as well as the subject of biology). However, simply introducing the special *topoi* seems not enough. It's possible, as evidenced in the sample of papers described here, to use the special *topoi* in a reductive manner. The authors of "Facing Reality" and "Unrefined Ore: The Mask of Anne Bradstreet" show us that student writers can generate and

[1] In fact, when discussing grading with the TAs in the Teaching Masterworks course, the professor assigned the paper arguing that "The Devil and Tom Walker" and "The Devil and Irv Cherniske" are similar a holistic score of 5 out of 6, saying that while it "lacks [the] polish and sophistication of [a] 6… [it uses] good examples to make [it] clear" (p. 128).

support their own ideas, even ideas that challenge the professor's reading of a text, while employing the special *topoi* to make their case with this audience. However, students who persist in employing phrases in the spirit of "T. Corghesan Boyle makes it perfectly clear" may not only possess views in conflict with their audience but also lack the strategies to persuade their audience effectively. Heightening a student's awareness of the differing rhetorical strategies of academic discourses could help her make necessary shifts to produce effective discourse. Perhaps the skill necessary to make these rhetorical shifts, as well as the skilled ability to read and understand discourse from several academic disciplines, is a more pragmatic skill to teach than this professor's desire to teach a universal ability "to argue."

As in the class Herrington (1988) observed, the lectures and discussions of this class "served more to open up issues and possible readings than to try to identify a single correct reading" (p. 145) and offered implicit instruction in methods of interpretation. Herrington found that "the writers of the more successful papers seemed to follow more closely the method of interpretation that was implicit in the conduct of class discussions" (p.145). Though the sample of student papers in this present study did not reveal a relationship between use of the special *topoi* and evaluation, I would like to see such textual analysis repeated with a larger sample. Further research is also necessary before I can confidently claim students actually learned to use these special *topoi* in this class. The assumptions about writing about literature students possess when they enter a course like this deserve study.

Rhetorical analyses such as Fahnestock and Secor's allow us to step back from closely held disciplinary assumptions and examine their value-laden nature. This perspective allows us to recognize what in literary studies may be only vaguely understood methodological assumptions, and proceed making more informed choices as we shape new disciplinary discourse. Such analyses ought to inform further observations of undergraduate literature courses to determine how close or wide the gap between current scholarship and pedagogical practice really is. An intervention study, exploring the impact of explicit instruction in the use of special *topoi* and effective pedagogical strategies could provide useful insights into the relationship between cognition and situated learning as well as determine if other students, like the author of "Unrefined Ore: The Mask of Anne Bradstreet," can be taught to effectively and non-reductively use these rhetorical strategies.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Give a Formal Name to Something I Already Knew": Distinguishing Discipline-Specific and Generally Held Discourse Values in an Undergraduate Literature Course

The significant but implicit presence of the special *topoi* of literary criticism that I observed in the discourse of an undergraduate introductory literature course in Chapter 3 suggests that, following the recommendations of Shaugnessy (1977), Bizzell (1982), Bartholomae (1985), MacDonald (1987, 1989), and Pullman (1994), explicit instruction in these disciplinary discourse features could help students whose previous educational experience hasn't familiarized them with their use. However, textual analysis of a small sample of student papers did not reveal a connection between using the special *topoi* in writing assignments and receiving a higher grade. Issues of coherence, a textual feature explicitly valued in the course through repeated admonitions, may have been more influential in evaluation of student writing. In fact, during an interview the professor stated that his goal is *not* to inculcate students in disciplinary conventions but to help students develop widely applicable skills in argumentation.

Additionally, whether explicit instruction in discourse features that have been traditionally transmitted tacitly can help a wider range of students is a controversial matter. One of the goals of MacDonald's call for researchers to undertake a "taxonomic analysis of what students are being asked to do" (1989, p. 432) in the writing assignments students face across the curriculum is to develop "a set of descriptive

guidelines that could help generate more successful academic texts" (p. 411). Yet theories of "situated learning," which stress the social nature of learning over the cognitive, favor tacit absorption over the teaching of abstractions (Wenger, 1999). Aviva Freedman (1993a, 1993b) contends that, based on research that suggests students can apply genre conventions without any explicit instruction in their use, explicit instruction in features distinctive of different genres is not necessary, may not be possible, and may even be harmful in its potential to inhibit students from enacting their tacitly acquired knowledge. However, Ann Blakeslee (1997), in her study of physicists co-authoring an article, identifies the implicit nature of situated modeling and mentoring practices as a potential impediment to learning and recommends making such instruction more explicit.

Perhaps the abstractions of rhetorical theory, such as special *topoi*, can act as an effective bridge between cognitive and situative theories of learning. Would drawing novices' attention to the rhetorical situation that their writing enters into facilitate the development of a productive, transferable skill? Though skill transfer is often associated with a cognitive model of learning (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996), it is also a goal for theorists of situative learning such as James Greeno (1997) who argues that learners who are attuned to "constraints and affordances that are invariant across learning-to-transfer transformation" (p. 12) should transfer skills easily. For writing in the disciplines, attention to audience and audience-based warrants may well be appropriate "attunements to constraints and affordances." Greeno suggests that:

> by arranging learning activities in ways that make skills and routine knowledge functional for students' contributions to broader social activities and meaningful for their development as learners, students' efforts and successes in learning can make sense to them in ways that are not available when the curriculum is organized primarily as a trajectory of skill and knowledge acquisition for its own sake. (p. 10)

Encouraging students to see their arguments as participating in the "broader social activities" of the discipline of literary studies may help students write more effective arguments.

The concept of special *topoi* may prove particularly useful to the evolving research and theory on situated learning. In a response to Freedman's claim that genre features cannot be taught explicitly, Fahnestock (1993) points to the long history of presumably successful classical rhetorical instruction in abstract and flexible genre features such as "opening moves," "arrangement strategies," and special *topoi* (p. 267). Rhetorical theory stretching back to its ancient roots teaches that an effective speaker is one who is not only knowledgeable in the subject of the discourse, but can present one's self as a reputable and authoritative member of the discursive community through awareness of the intended audience's assumptions and values. When introducing the concept of special and common *topoi*, Aristotle claims that "most enthymemes are derived from these species that are particular and specific, fewer from the common [topics]" (Kennedy trans., 1991, p. 46). George Kennedy notes that this is because of a need for "content": "rhetoric constantly employs the special knowledge of other arts,

such as politics or ethics" (1991, p. 47). Teaching proficiency in writing disciplinary discourse (which Eitenne Wenger considers a type of "situated" learning) can be consistent with the counsel of rhetoric to construct effective audience-based appeals. Geroge Pullman (1994) argues that his proposal to teach discipline-specific topical invention techniques places writing in a "real-world" context rather than viewing it as "a metaphysical quest which exceeds all temporality, or, at the other extreme, a schoolbook exercise performed for the sake of a grade" (p. 380). Likewise, the special *topoi* may be useful methodological tools for students. Greeno emphasizes that methodology or "practices of learning" is as much a part of learning as domain-knowledge.

However, rhetorical analyses of the implicit aspects of disciplinary discourse may be too reductive, and thus, as Freedman suggests, pedagogical techniques that explicate them may encourage the production of less successful discourse, particularly in disciplines such as literary studies that value complexity. Christopher Weaver (1999) and Pullman (1994) caution against just such a possibility. Weaver contends that "conventions are not demystified merely by defining them" and that students may be likely to "seek shortcuts" by "regurgitating the conventions as information (often out of context) rather than employing them to interpret information" (1999, p. 209). While ultimately supporting teaching topical invention, Pullman notes that the "excessively codified" special *topoi* have the potential to yield "too much rigidity" and "could reduce interpretation to a plodding application of rules that would produce formulaic and uninteresting interpretations" (pp. 384-5). Thus the question remains as to whether the

types of rhetorical abstractions that Shaughnessy (1977), Bizzell (1982), Bartholomae (1985), and MacDonald (1987,1989) call for can effectively be taught in the context of a semester-long, introductory-level, undergraduate course. Likewise, the current lively debate among literary scholars such as Graff (1992, 1994, 1995, 1996), Sosnoski (1994, 1995), and Spanos (1993) over whether undergraduate education ought to be a site of disciplinary inculcation suggests that literature professors may resist calls to teach their discipline's discourse conventions. An instructor whose stated intention is to teach generally applicable reading and writing skills may discount students' work which focuses too narrowly on the conventions of disciplinary discourse community. Or, despite such a goal, an instructor's internalization of the values of her disciplinary community may yet lead her to evaluate more highly those students who appeal to those values.

The following study attempts to address these questions by teasing apart and distinguishing the weights given to two discourse values in the evaluation of undergraduate writing in literature courses: widely-valued or "common" features such as coherence and discipline-specific features. First, this study seeks to investigate whether the rhetorical features of disciplinary discourse can be taught to students effectively enough for them to apply them in their writing. Second, this study considers how members of the community respond to discourse from non-members--a scenario that daily occurs in university classrooms. If widely-valued textual features such as coherence are more highly rewarded than discipline-specific appeals, perhaps it is the case as so many textbooks and instructors claim, that writing assignments in literature

courses aim to improve students' overall writing skill. However, if discipline-specific warrants are more highly valued, then even an undergraduate course intended for non-majors can be a site of disciplinary discourse, a borderland some students may choose to move into while others slip away from at the end of the semester.

The methodology of this study involves an intervention into the regular proceedings of an undergraduate literature course at a large research university. In this way, it has much in common with the methodology of a study by Theresa Rogers (1991), in which she introduced a ninth-grade English class to theoretically-informed intertextual approaches to literature. Rogers led one instructional unit in a course otherwise run by a teacher who employed largely New Critical approaches. The unit Rogers led introduced students to intertextual approaches advocated by Robert Scholes, Stanley Fish, Jonathan Culler, and other literary theorists by presenting modified selections from literary criticism originally published in journals. Rogers's analysis of classroom discussion, think aloud protocols of students reading a short story, and student interviews did not show consistent shifts in interpretive processes. However, the lack of effect may have resulted because Rogers's pedagogical approach was not reinforced by the teacher who was responsible for student evaluation—a significant motivator of student behavior. Rogers' intervention presented a substantial shift in the discipline of literary studies which the teacher seems not to have kept up with. The present study, however, does not seek to interfere with the theoretical lens through which students read literature (a lens that for this particular course is very similar to the one Rogers attempted to introduce) but instead seeks to clarify and distinguish the

already existing criteria for evaluating students' writing (which in many ways is the primary method for inferring and evaluating students' reading practices).

As part of the intervention, students were introduced to three of the special *topoi* of literary studies as identified by Fahnestock and Secor (1991). These special *topoi* were selected as representative of disciplinary discourse because they characterize the internalized, implicit assumptions that MacDonald (1987) says present the greatest challenges to inexperienced writers and because they are likely appealed to unconsciously by literary scholars, perhaps even by those against consciously socializing students into their academic discipline. The participants were also given explicit instruction in a widely valued discourse feature, coherence, which their professor had previously indicated explicitly to students was highly valued. Unlike Rogers's study, the present investigation focuses on students' writing and their instructors' responses to it in an effort to extend the analysis of my earlier observational study and explore the potentially situated nature of "good" writing.

Method

Participants

Undergraduates. Of the 264 students enrolled in this "Masterworks in American Literature" course, 257 completed (or partially completed) and returned a consent form during an early lecture meeting of the course. Of these, 176 (69%) indicated their willingness to let me photocopy their graded papers and have access to their final course grades. Respondents also specified their sex, year in college, major,

GPA, and verbal SAT score. Of the consenting participants who provided responses to these demographic queries,[1] 95 (54%) were female and 81 (46%) male; 16 (9%) were freshmen, 73 (42%) sophomores, 40 (23%) juniors, and 45 (26%) seniors. Their overall mean self-reported GPA was 3.08 and verbal SAT score was 596. I used a coding scheme to categorize the variety of their undergraduate majors into four main groups: 55 (36%) of the participants are pursuing majors in business, 47 (30%) in science or engineering, 26 (17%) in humanities, and 26 (17%) social science.

Those who volunteered to participate were not significantly different from those who did not in sex, years in college, or major categories (chi-squares < 1.0). Likewise, there were no significant differences in mean GPAs and verbal SAT scores ($p < 0.3$).

Teaching Assistants. The participants also included the graduate student teaching assistants who led the course's discussion sections and evaluated the students' performance. Five of the seven TAs (referred to here as Ann, Beth, Cathy, Dan, Ed, Frank, and Greg) indicated on a consent form their willingness to let me analyze any comments they write on participants' graded papers; however, one of these TAs, Greg, subsequently did not participate in the study. With the exception of Ed, who holds a M.Ed., had previously taught seventh-grade English for three years, and was pursuing further graduate work in education, all of the TAs were in their second semester of graduate study and teaching assistantship. Beth and Greg were enrolled in the

[1] 195 students specified their gender on the consent form (19 of whom declined to participate in the study, 176 of whom consented to participate), 192 students specified their year in college (18 declined, 174 consented), 170 specified their major (16 declined, 154 consented), 171 specified their GPA (14 declined, 157 consented), and 91 specified their verbal SAT score (2 declined and 89 consented).

comparative literature department; the rest of the TAs were enrolled in the English department, with Dan pursuing a MA in creative writing and the rest pursuing doctoral degrees in a variety of literature concentrations. All but one of the graduate student TAs (Dan) were enrolled in the professor's "Teaching Masterworks of American Literature," a seminar designed to supplement the TAs' teaching experience.

The Professor. The professor of the course is the same Associate Professor in English of my earlier observational study.

Course Setting

The "Masterworks in American Literature" course that is the setting of this study is the same course, two years later, of my earlier observational study. This course is a "lower division" literature course that fulfills a requirement for various academic majors. The professor made a few changes to the syllabus of the course since my observational study. Developing further the description of the course as a course in writing and thinking as much as reading, the professor added the following reference to Robert Scholes to the course description:

> Explicit throughout the course will be the notion--as Robert Scholes once explained–"that reading and writing are important because we read and write our world as well as our texts, and we are read and written by them in turn. Texts are places where power and weakness become visible and discussable, where learning and ignorance manifest themselves, where structures that enable and constrain our thoughts and actions become palpable." At its most fundamental level, then, this course will use the

study of literature to help its students become better readers, writers, and thinkers.

The list of readings for the course was also altered from the required readings of two years before. The bulk of the readings, especially early in the semester, remained the same (see Appendix A); however, this semester's list no longer included Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil" and "Young Goodman Brown," Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker," and T. Coraghesan Boyle's "The Devil and Irv Cherniske.". Instead, Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time* was assigned earlier in the semester, and several new readings were added towards the end of the semester: Raymond Chandler's "The Simple Art of Murder" and "Red Wind," Fredric Jameson's "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Richard Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," Américo Paredes's "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez," Toni Morrison's "Unspeakable Things Unspoken" and *Sula***,** Rodolfo Gonzales's "My Name Is Joaqín," and John Sayles's film *Lone Star*. The grading policies and description of writing assignments remained unchanged.

Intervention Design

To tease apart and distinguish the weights given to the use of discipline-specific rhetorical strategies and more general stylistic strategies in evaluating undergraduate writing, I developed a quasi-experimental intervention design partly modeled on the methodology used by Diane Schallert, Jeannine Turner, and Timothy Schallert (1995). I intervened in this course by conducting two workshops. One workshop focused on the special *topoi* of literary criticism identified by Fahnestock and Secor (1991) which value complex, non-reductive interpretations. The second workshop focused on

strategies, identified by Willem Vande Kopple (1983), Martha Kolln (1995), and others, for improving written coherence. The workshops were held roughly one week before the due dates of each of the two two-page papers. For comparison purposes, I needed a group of student participants who took the workshops and a group of participants who did not. Also, to investigate whether the effects of the treatment are on-going and control for the possibility of overall improved performance on the second paper, half of the workshop participants attended the special *topoi* workshop before writing the first paper and the coherence workshop before the second paper, while the other half attended the coherence workshop before writing the first paper and the special *topoi* workshop before the second paper. In order to ensure sufficient participation in the intervention, the professor permitted me to conduct workshops in four of the required discussion section meetings. Three of the TA participants (Ann, Beth, and Cathy) had indicated on their consent forms their willingness to let me act as a substitute for them and lead two of their discussion section meetings, one before each paper. In the week prior to the first due date of each paper, I acted as the substitute TA for both of Ann's sections and one section of each of Beth and Cathy's discussion sections for a total of four sections. Before the first paper, I conducted the special *topoi* workshop in two sections and the coherence workshop in the other two sections. Before the second paper, the workshop types conducted in these sections were transposed. Out of concerns for issues of equity that the professor of this course and I shared, I also conducted a voluntary workshop on campus in the early evening in the week before each paper was due. I notified the students who did not receive the intervention

treatments in their discussion sections of this voluntary workshop by visiting their discussion sections and distributing fliers. Table 4.1 displays this overall intervention design.

TABLE 4.1: Intervention Design.

Discussion Section	Intervention Treatment Prior to First Paper	Intervention Treatment Prior to Second Paper
Ann's first section	Special *Topoi* workshop	Coherence workshop
Ann's second section	Coherence workshop	Special *Topoi* workshop
Beth's first section	Special *Topoi* workshop	Coherence workshop
Beth's second section	no treatment	no treatment
Cathy's first section	no treatment	no treatment
Cathy's second section	Coherence workshop	Special *Topoi* workshop
Voluntary workshop	Special *Topoi* workshop	Coherence workshop
Dan, Ed, Frank, and Greg's discussion sections	no treatment	no treatment

Those student participants in discussion sections led by Dan, Ed, Frank, and Greg did not receive any intervention treatment, with the exception of the participants in the voluntary workshops. Their papers and grades were collected and treated as data from a control group.[2] Thus there were two large research groupings: those who received treatment and those who did not. Other comparisons were also conducted to check for effects of workshop order or of individual TAs. Table 4.2 presents the

[2] Papers by participants in Greg's sections were not collected because Greg did not respond to my requests to photocopy participants' graded work.

number of student participants who took part in each experimental condition, including participants in the voluntary workshops.

TABLE 4.2: Number of participants in each experimental condition. These figures reflect participants who attended the voluntary workshops and participants who were absent from their discussion sections the days when workshops were held. They do not include students who were not study participants (those who did not agree to participate and Greg's students).

Intervention Treatment Prior to First Paper			**Intervention Treatment Prior to Second Paper**		
No Treatment (Control)	Special *Topoi* Workshop	Coherence Workshop	No Treatment (Control)	Special *Topoi* Workshop	Coherence Workshop
105	**23**	**15**	**106**	**18**	**16**

Workshop Procedure. Though the substance of each of the two workshops was entirely different, I kept their formats as similar as possible to avoid the effects of issues such as learning styles which could muddy results. The 50 minute time constraint of the discussion sections and the fixed format kept the workshops running at a brisk pace; however, I tried to keep the tutorials lively and interesting and allow participants to ask and answer questions.[3] There are more special *topoi* of literary criticism and strategies for writing coherently than I could realistically and effectively introduce to students in 50 minutes, so I limited the number of each to three. I began each workshop by taking attendance, re-introducing myself, and passing out a handout they could take home that listed the three "writing strategies" to be covered, provided space to take notes, and

gave my email address and phone number (see Appendix D). I also distributed (and collected back) a second handout that contained sample passages of student writing (see Appendix E). I then followed scripts, first giving an overview of the three writing strategies and their significance, then spending approximately 10 minutes per strategy discussing the successful examples on the handout and brainstorming together about how to apply each strategy to a deficient example. I projected a larger image of their handout on an overhead where I wrote down the results of our brainstorming. The students then spent fifteen minutes taking a "quiz" in which they identified which, if any, of the three strategies they were just introduced to were used in 12 short sample passages of student writing (see Appendix F).[4] Each quiz contained, in random order, two passages exemplifying each strategy and six passages that did not follow any of the strategies. The quizzes provided a check for treatment effectiveness, though they may also have served as another learning opportunity. Their quizzes were then collected, and the last five minutes were spent going over the appropriate quiz responses.

Special Topoi Workshop. The special *topoi* workshop was presented to the students as introducing "three strategies for writing about literature" and began with a brief explanation that some of the problems students frequently face and complain about

[3] I piloted both workshops beforehand in sections of two other undergraduate writing and literature courses to ensure that there was sufficient time to cover the workshop materials, gather helpful feedback from students, and test the difficulty level of the "quizzes."

[4] In an attempt to further standardize the structure of the workshops, I selected and modified passages for the quizzes so that the passages would be comparable in length and readability. The special *topoi* quiz contained twelve passages that were between 76 and 189 words long (124 words on average), read at Flesch-Kincaid grade levels between 8.5 and 12 (10.9 average), and had Flesch readability ease scores between 38.1 and 67.3 (53 average). The coherence quiz contained twelve passages that were between 30 and 137 words long (67.6 average), read at Flesch-Kincaid grade levels between 6.3 and 12 (10 average), and had Flesch readability ease scores between 27.2 and 75.2 (52 average).

when facing the essay assignments required of them in their literature courses may be the result of their encountering the expectations of an academic community that is new to them. I introduced the idea that some of the expectations of different academic communities are rooted in values, and that the academic community of literary scholars particularly values complexity. We then examined two passages from student papers I collected during my 1999 observational study, both from papers on *Huckleberry Finn*, but one assuming a value of complexity and the other assuming a value of simplicity. I then introduced the appearance/reality, ubiquity, and paradigm *topoi*, presenting them as effective strategies for writing about literature that appeal to their audience's assumptions about literary argument. My rationale for excluding the *contemptus mundi* and the paradox special *topoi*, an exclusion necessitated by time constraints, was that the *contemptus mundi topos* seems the least methodological (being more a stance and attitude than a specific way to manipulate texts) and most unstable in the current professional discourse (see my analysis in Chapter 2) and the paradox *topos* was largely absent from the findings of my earlier observational study (see Chapter 3). We examined passages that employed each of the three strategies and compared them with passages that may have attempted to use these strategies but ultimately invoked an unjustified preference for simplicity and reduction and were thus not as effective with their audience (in other words, the grades the papers from which these passages were extracted received during the 1999 semester were lower). We concluded discussion of each strategy by collectively brainstorming ways to apply it to an argument about a text they had read in their course, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper."

Coherence Workshop. The coherence workshop was presented to the students as introducing "three strategies for making writing flow" and began with a brief explanation that writers often complain that their writing doesn't "flow," and when they say this they may be detecting a problem with coherence. I explained that the strategies presented in the workshop, which all stem from the observation that readers tend to follow a text more easily when new information is introduced in the context of old information, are primarily revision strategies and could cause writer's block if adhered to too strictly when drafting. I then introduced the same subject strategy, the topic hand-off strategy, and the preview and shift strategy, and we examined successful examples of each strategy as well as passages that could be improved by applying a strategy. The passages used in this workshop and quiz were culled, with slight modifications, from exemplifying passages in Vande Kopple (1983), Williams (2000), and Charney, Neuwirth, Geisler, and Kaufer (In preparation). We concluded discussion of each strategy by collectively brainstorming ways to apply it to another faulty sample passage.

Students' Texts

Data collection. After they had graded each set of the two assigned papers, the TAs (with the exception of Greg) gave me access to the papers, and I photocopied them, with any attached drafts, for all the consenting participants. This method ensured that participants and non-participants would not be disclosed as such to the TAs. I collected 131 of the participants' first papers and 125 of their second papers. Table 4.3 breaks

down these totals by intervention condition. Because some students did not hand in papers or handed them in late, the figures in Table 4.3 are lower than the numbers presented in Table 4.2. For subsequent analyses, smaller samples of papers by participants who received no treatment were drawn randomly from the larger pools of 96 first papers and 92 second papers.

TABLE 4.3: Total number of papers collected by participants exposed to each intervention condition. These figures include papers by participants who attended the voluntary workshops and papers by participants who were absent from their discussion sections the days when workshops were held (and thus received no treatment).

Intervention Treatment Prior to First Paper			**Intervention Treatment Prior to Second Paper**		
No Treatment (Control)	Special *Topoi* Workshop	Coherence Workshop	No Treatment (Control)	Special *Topoi* Workshop	Coherence Workshop
94	**21**	**14**	**92**	**17**	**16**

Analysis. The grades participants received from their TAs serve as an important measure of the rhetorical success of participants' papers. However, they are not sufficient for my purposes because the evaluative criteria used to assign a grade are not always clear. To isolate evaluations of participants' use of general coherence strategies and audience-specific argumentative strategies, two English graduate students studying rhetoric and composition served as raters. They were asked to rate a sample of participants' papers by providing rankings on a 7-point Likert-type scale of three criteria: Overall Quality, Sophistication of Literary Argument (specifically characterized by complexity), and Coherence. They were trained together by rating papers collected during my 1999 observational study that represented a range of quality

based on grades received, previous raters' rankings, and my qualitative analysis. This training served to "calibrate" their expectations of writing quality. The sample of 161 papers they read consisted of first and second papers by participants in the experimental (all 68 papers collected) and control groups (all 65 papers by participants in Ann, Beth, and Cathy's sections that received no treatment plus first and second papers by 14 randomly selected participants in Dan, Ed, and Frank's sections). They received the papers in random order, with grades and any TA commentary removed, and were encouraged to read only around ten papers in a sitting over a period of a few months to avoid fatigue.

To facilitate analyses more closely focused on the special *topoi* and coherence strategies the participants used, I analyzed the number and type of special *topoi* and coherence strategies evident in the 161 papers.[5] I categorized the primary, secondary, and tertiary special *topoi* evident in the papers. To determine if a special *topos* was present, I rhetorically analyzed the paper, searching specifically for its underlying methodological assumptions and matching those to the definitions of five special *topoi* of literary criticism (though not taught in the workshops, I included Fahnestock and Secor's paradox *topos* and the social justice *topos* I observed in my analysis of professional discourse in chapter 2 in this analysis to facilitate a repetition of the analysis conducted as part of my observational study). The distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary allowed me to indicate when papers appealed to more

[5] As the participants' identifying information had been removed from the papers, I was unaware of whether or not the writer had participated in an experimental condition when I analyzed the papers.

than one special *topos* and, when they did, to rank the *topoi* on the basis of which was most and least prominent in the paper.

I then conducted a similar procedure when determining the coherence strategies evident in each paper, but I limited the strategies I searched for to just those three taught in the workshop. Based upon a preliminary analysis of a sub-group of papers, I determined working definitional criteria for the coherence strategies. To qualify as evidencing the same subject or topic hand-off strategies, a paper had to contain three or more contiguous sentences in which the strategy was evident. For the preview and shift strategy, the working definition was more liberal; a paper was said to contain the strategy if it was used in a thesis statement, topic sentence, or within a paragraph to organize the sequence of two or more subsequent paragraphs or sentences. In other words, the preview and shift strategy only had to appear once in the paper for the paper to qualify as evidencing the strategy. In addition to identifying the special *topoi* and coherence strategies present in the papers, I also attempted to rate the quality of their application. For the special *topoi* present, I assigned two scores: a Definitional Quality Score indicating how well the application of the special *topos* met the definition of the *topos* developed from analyses of professional discourse, and a Complexity Quality Score indicating how well the application of the special *topos* supported the overarching professional value of complexity by elucidating textual features that were not self-evident or illustrating the complexity of the text. For the coherence strategies present, I assigned a "Flow" Quality Score indicating how effectively the application of the strategy introduced new information in the context of old information to facilitate the

"flow" of the text. These evaluations were made on 7-point Likert-type scales, with 1 being a low evaluation and 7 a high evaluation. Lastly, I also determined the primary, secondary, and tertiary stasis issues addressed in each paper. As a check on the reliability of my analyses, a second, trained rater analyzed 25% of the papers, applying this same coding scheme of identification of primary, secondary, and tertiary special *topoi*, coherence strategies, and stases and evaluation of the special *topoi* and coherence strategies.

Students' Perceptions of Workshops

In the last weeks of the semester, after both papers had been graded and returned to students, I returned to the four discussion sections in which I had administered the intervention workshops and asked students to complete a short Perception Questionnaire (see Appendix G) soliciting their perceptions of their enjoyment and understanding of the workshops, the helpfulness of the workshops, and their usefulness in comparison to other resources such as teacher conferences, their undergraduate writing center, the professor's lectures, their regular discussion sections meetings, and talking with classmates outside of class. I asked that they rate their perceptions on 7-point Likert-type scales as well as provide their own open-ended commentary. The questionnaire was anonymous to encourage candid responses; however, as a result its outcomes include responses from students who elected not to be study participants and whose papers were not collected and analyzed. Additionally, it is not possible to verify that respondents were actually present when the workshops were administered. The

students who participated in the voluntary workshop were also contacted via email and asked to complete this questionnaire. In total, 58 students completed the questionnaire with responses regarding one or both workshops.

Results

Reliability of Ratings

The reliability of the 7-point Likert-type rankings of the two raters was determined by computing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. While scores from the two raters were all positively correlated, the correlations were all relatively low (Overall quality, 0.44; Complexity and sophistication of literary argument, 0.44; Coherence, 0.31). While the low correlations are disappointing, they do not invalidate further analysis. Histograms of the raters' rankings indicate that the weak correlations are due in part to the comparatively higher rankings of one of the raters. An additional (typically conservative) test of the trustworthiness of the ratings is provided by the ANOVAs presented below. Low inter-rater reliabilities would tend to obscure "real" differences between the variables (i.e., producing Type II errors), rather than producing spurious differences (Type I errors). For subsequent analyses, the raters scores were added together to produce three scores ranging from 2-14-points for each paper, a score for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Literary Argument, and Coherence.

The reliability of identifications that I and a second rater made of special *topoi*, coherence strategies, and stases in forty (25%) of the student papers was not determined

to be significant as computed by a Cohen's kappa. As was the case with similar ratings in the observational study presented in Chapter 3, our designations of special *topoi*, coherence strategies, and stases as primary, secondary, and tertiary frequently disagreed. However, when these designations are disregarded, our percentages of agreement are worth noting. In 82.5% of the papers we agreed on the presence of at least one special *topos* regardless of its primary, secondary, or tertiary designation (and in 50% we agreed further on the presence of a second special *topos*). In 60% of the papers we agreed on the presence of a coherence strategy regardless of its primary, secondary, or tertiary designation, and in 90% of the papers we agreed on the presence of a stases regardless of its primary, secondary, or tertiary designation. The reliability of our ratings of Definitional Quality and Complexity Quality of the special *topoi* and the "Flow" Quality of the coherence strategies we agreed were present was determined by computing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. Our ratings of the students' applications of the special *topoi* were positively correlated (Definitional Quality, 0.43, and Complexity Quality, 0.57); however, our ratings for the coherence strategies were not significantly correlated. For subsequent analyses, my identifications, designations, and ratings were used.

Outcomes of Intervention Workshops: Students' Texts

To look for differences in students' papers over time (from the first to the second essay), 2 x 4 Within Subjects Repeated Measure MANOVAs were conducted; in which the first factor was first or second essay and the second factor was treatment group (coherence-first, special *topoi*-first, workshop group-instructor control, and no-

workshop group-instructor control). To look for differences between the experimental and control groups, 2 x 4 Between Subjects Repeated Measure MANOVAs were conducted in which the first factor was first or second essay and the second factor was treatment group (coherence-first, special *topoi*-first, workshop group-instructor control, and no-workshop group-instructor control). In an attempt to push further for possible effects of the workshops, a one-way ANOVA was conducted with the scores and grades given to the first paper only. Because some participants did not attend the second workshop or hand in a second paper, looking at the first paper only allowed the group sizes to increase to a total $n = 80$. For all analyses, the confidence interval was set at $p < .05$.

Table 4.4 presents the results of the various outcome measures of each of the groups in the interventional design, and Table 4.5 presents the average number of special *topoi* and coherence strategies evidenced in papers by participants in each group.[6] Attending the workshops did not significantly improve raters' scores or paper grades: $F(12,162) = 0.716$, $p = 0.734$. There were no significant difference between scores and grades of the first and second papers: $F(4,52) = 1.764$, $p = 0.150$. Attendance at a particular workshop did not significantly improve the raters' scores and paper grades on the students' papers written soon after the workshop. Only the no-workshop-instructor-control group received lower raters' Coherence Scores on their second papers (5.88) than did the coherence-first group (8.22) and the workshop-

[6] The experimental group sizes are smaller in these comparisons than they are in Table 4.3 because they include data pertaining to only those participants who had attended both workshops. The figures in Table 4.3 include participants who had attended only one of the workshops.

Table 4.4: Average Rater Assigned Scores and TA Assigned Grades for the Papers by Participants in Each Experimental Group. The raters scores on 7-point Likert-type scales were combined to create scores on a 14-point scale. The TAs used a letter grading scale with + and – grades, which I converted into its 4-point numeric equivalent. Frequently the TAs assigned a "split" grade, such as "B-/C+," and in such cases, I used the mean of both grades to calculate one numeric grade for each paper.

	First Paper				Second Paper			
Experimental Group	**Overall Score**	**Argument Score**	**Coherence Score**	**Paper Grade**	**Overall Score**	**Argument Score**	**Coherence Score**	**Paper Grade**
Coherence Workshop First, Special *Topoi* Workshop Second (n = 9)	8.44 (3.32)	8.56 (3.64)	7.56 (2.92)	2.62 (1.35)	7.89 (3.48)	8.00 (3.74)	8.22 (2.99)	2.80 (1.40)
Special *Topoi* Workshop First, Coherence Workshop Second (n = 14)	7.50 (2.79)	7.43 (3.16)	8.14 (1.88)	2.33 (0.84)	6.93 (2.76)	6.86 (2.85)	7.36 (2.02)	2.00 (0.93)
Control Group from Ann, Beth, and Cathy's sections (n = 20)	8.15 (2.48)	8.25 (2.31)	7.55 (2.82)	2.59 (0.95)	6.75 (2.49)	6.55 (3.03)	8.15 (1.73)	2.27 (0.99)
Randomly Selected Control Group from Dan, Ed, and Frank's sections (n = 16)	7.25 (2.86)	7.25 (3.19)	8.06 (2.14)	2.41 (0.68)	6.63 (2.78)	5.94 (2.59)	5.88 (2.80)	2.71 (0.90)

instructor-control group (8.15): $F(12,162) = 1.894$, $p < 0.038$. Though a test of Within Subjects Contrasts indicated a significant time contrast for raters' Overall Scores: $F(1,55) = 6.777$, $p < 0.012$, and Argument Scores: $F(1,55) = 4.744$, $p < 0.034$, again only the control groups mean scores varied over time, becoming lower for their second papers, $p < 0.037$. Likewise, students in the workshop groups did not employ significantly more special *topoi* or coherence strategies in their papers than the control groups: $F(6, 110) = 0.786$, $p = .583$. Nor did the number of these *topoi* and strategies

TABLE 4.5: Average Number of Special *Topoi* and Coherence Strategies Used in Papers by Participants in Each Experimental Condition.

	First Paper			Second Paper		
Experimental Group	**Special *Topoi* Introduced in Workshop**	**Special *Topoi***	**Coherence Strategies**	**Special *Topoi* Introduced in Workshop**	**Special *Topoi***	**Coherence Strategies**
Coherence Workshop First, Special *Topoi* Workshop Second (n = 9)	1.67 (0.71)	2.44 (0.73)	1.44 (0.73)	1.33 (0.87)	2.22 (0.83)	1.22 (0.67)
Special *Topoi* Workshop First, Coherence Workshop Second (n = 14)	1.43 (0.65)	1.86 (0.95)	0.86 (0.66)	1.43 (1.22)	1.86 (1.17)	1.36 (0.74)
Control Group from Ann, Beth, and Cathy's sections (n = 20)	1.35 (0.59)	2.10 (0.72)	1.15 (0.75)	1.45 (0.69)	2.05 (0.83)	1.00 (0.73)
Randomly Selected Control Group from Dan, Ed, and Frank's sections (n = 16)	1.44 (0.73)	2.06 (1.00)	0.88 (0.72)	1.31 (0.60)	2.06 (0.77)	0.88 (0.62)

significantly differ from the first to the second paper: $F(2, 54) = .213$, $p = .809$. Attendance at a workshop did not significantly increase the number of workshop-introduced strategies students' used in the papers they subsequently wrote: $F(6,110) = 1.042$, $p = 0.402$. Looking at only the scores and grades students' received for their first papers, the workshop and control groups again did not significantly differ.

Pushing still further for possible effects of experimental condition, those exposed to the experimental conditions ($n = 23$) and the control groups ($n = 36$) were treated as two groups and 2 x 2 Repeated Measure MANOVAs were conducted comparing scores, grades, number of special *topoi* invoked, and number of coherence strategies used. Again, no significant differences between first and second papers and treatment groups emerged. Only the control groups' scores significantly changed, becoming lower for the second paper for their Overall Scores: $F(1,57) = 7.188$, $p < 0.01$, and Argument Scores: $F(1,57) = 5.194$, $p < 0.026$.[7]

Table 4.6 presents the mean Quality Scores for the primary special *topos* identified in those papers that evidenced a primary special *topos*. Again, attending either workshop did not significantly improve these scores: $F(6,98) = 0.137$, $p = 0.991$. The scores for the first and second papers did differ significantly, with Definitional Scores rising and Complexity Scores lowering somewhat for the second papers of all groups: $F(2,50) = 4.466$, $p < 0.016$.[8] Table 4.7 presents the mean Quality Scores for the primary coherence strategies *topos* identified in those papers that evidenced a primary coherence strategy. Only the no-workshop control group's scores differed significantly over time, becoming lower for their second papers (from 4.50 to 3.00): $F(1,34) = 4.387$,

[7] Due to their even smaller group sizes, analyses of individual TAs' sections are far from ideal. However, t-tests indicated that in Beth's two sections, one experimental (special *topoi* workshop first, coherence workshop second, $n = 5$) and one control ($n = 10$), the control group received a significantly higher mean grade on their second papers (2.56, SD = 0.95) than did the experimental group (1.36, SD = 0.42): $p < .005$. Other than this result counter to my hypothesis, no significant differences emerged in analyses of individual TAs' sections.

[8] When examining only those papers with a primary *topos* introduced in the workshop, the repeated measure MANOVA results likewise indicated a lack of significant effects: $F(6,50) = 0.438$, $p = 0.85$. It should be noted that eliminating those papers with social justice and paradox as primary *topoi* reduced further already uncomfortably small group sizes.

$p < 0.044$. The small group sizes make it impossible to conclude that the intervention had no effect on quality of special *topoi* and coherence strategies application. Because the group sizes decreased further, MANOVAs were not run comparing the Quality Scores assigned to those papers that utilized secondary and tertiary special *topoi* and coherence strategies.

TABLE 4.6: Mean Definitional and Complexity Scores for the Primary Special *Topos* Invoked in Papers by Participants in Each Experimental Group. Scores were assigned by the researcher on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

	Primary Special *Topos*			
	First Paper		**Second Paper**	
Experimental Group	Definitional Score	Complexity Score	Definitional Score	Complexity Score
Coherence Workshop First, Special *Topoi* Workshop Second ($n = 9$)	4.78 (2.28)	4.89 (2.32)	5.44 (1.81)	4.56 (2.74)
Special *Topoi* Workshop First, Coherence Workshop Second ($n = 11$)	3.55 (2.02)	3.27 (2.10)	4.36 (2.11)	3.36 (2.11)
Control Group from Ann, Beth, and Cathy's sections ($n = 19$)	4.63 (1.98)	4.05 (2.04)	5.05 (1.78)	3.89 (2.42)
Randomly Selected Control Group from Dan, Ed, and Frank's sections ($n = 14$)	4.14 (1.51)	3.36 (2.02)	4.79 (1.31)	2.93 (1.82)

TABLE 4.7: Mean Facilitation of "Flow" Scores for the Primary Coherence Strategy Used in Papers by Participants in Each Experimental Group. Scores were assigned by the researcher on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

	Primary Coherence Strategy	
	First Paper	**Second Paper**
Experimental Group	"Flow" Score	"Flow" Score
Coherence Workshop First, Special *Topoi* Workshop Second (n = 8)	4.75 (1.49)	4.00 (2.27)
Special *Topoi* Workshop First, Coherence Workshop Second (n = 9)	4.00 (1.94)	4.67 (1.58)
Control Group from Ann, Beth, and Cathy's sections (n = 13)	4.77 (1.64)	4.77 (1.24)
Randomly Selected Control Group from Dan, Ed, and Frank' sections (n = 8)	4.50 (1.31)	3.00 (1.60)

Discussion of Analysis of Students' Texts and Experimental Condition

As the lack of effect of treatment condition on paper grades and rater-assigned Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence Scores indicates, attending one of the interventional workshops appears to have had no effect on the evaluation of the participants' papers. The workshops had no significant immediate impact on the evaluation of the participants' first papers and no enduring or residual effect on the participants' second papers. However, this lack of an effect on paper grades and rater-assigned scores cannot be interpreted as an indication that students' use of the special

topoi and coherence strategies does not influence student evaluation. As the lack of workshop effect on the number and quality of special *topoi* and coherence strategies indicates, the workshops appear to have been unsuccessful in influencing participants to apply the workshop strategies in their writing to a greater degree than the participants already would have and/or unsuccessful in equipping participants with the needed skills to apply these strategies. It may be the case that the short workshops were unpersuasive to participants who may have seen little connection between what I presented and the way their TAs, whom the students were aware graded their papers, routinely lead discussion sections. Or it may be the case that the design of the workshops was flawed with too much information presented too quickly and with little reinforcement. The possibility also exists that these strategies simply cannot be effectively taught as abstractions defined through examination of particular examples extracted from larger arguments.[9] Unfortunately, the lower-than-expected numbers of participants to fulfill all conditions to be included in these analyses led to such small group sizes that it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions on the effects of these workshops.

Outcomes of Intervention Workshops: Workshop Quizzes

The results of the workshop quizzes can serve to check the workshops' treatment effect; however, as there is no baseline comparison to be made with quizzes taken prior to exposure to the workshop treatment, it is not possible to measure how

[9] Two papers in the sample contained explicit references to the appearance/reality strategy as one the students were applying. Such explicit and formulaic mentioning of what is usually an underlying warrant runs counter to the intent of the workshops and may support Weaver's (1999) contention that such instruction is too reductive.

much the participation in the workshops contributed to quiz performance. The participants' scores on the quizzes serve as a measure of participants' ability to recognize the writing about literature and coherence strategies they had just been introduced to moments before during the workshop.[10] Though these scores do not indicate how successfully participants can apply these strategies in their own writing, they may flag participants who did not pay attention or for whom the learning style of the workshops was unsuccessful. (These participants may be dropped from subsequent analyses that assume a successful treatment effect.) Figure 4.1 presents the results of the special *topoi*, and Figure 4.2 presents the results of the quiz coherence quiz. Of those who completed the special *topoi* workshop, 24 participants (58.5%) answered 8 (66.7%) or more of the special *topoi* quiz questions correctly. Of those who completed the coherence workshop, 24 participants (77.5%) answered 8 (66.7%) or more of the coherence quiz questions correctly.

[10] That the students in my earlier observational study (Chapter 3) performed so well on a questionnaire similar to, yet even more difficult than, the Writing About Literature Quiz underscores the lack of confidence we can have in these quizzes as a measure of workshop effect.

FIGURE 4.1: Frequency Count of Special *Topoi* Workshop Quiz Scores Received by Workshop Participants (Mean Number Correct = 7.76, SD = 2.21).

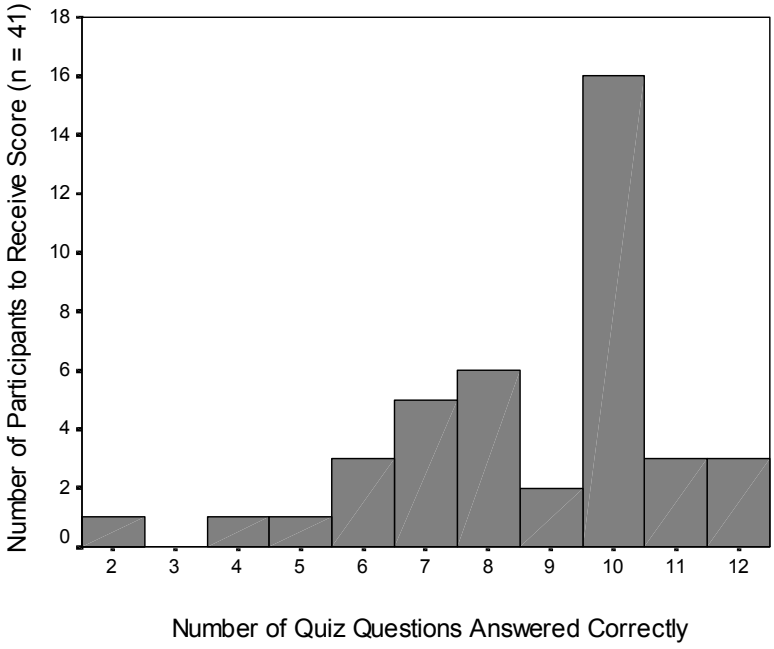
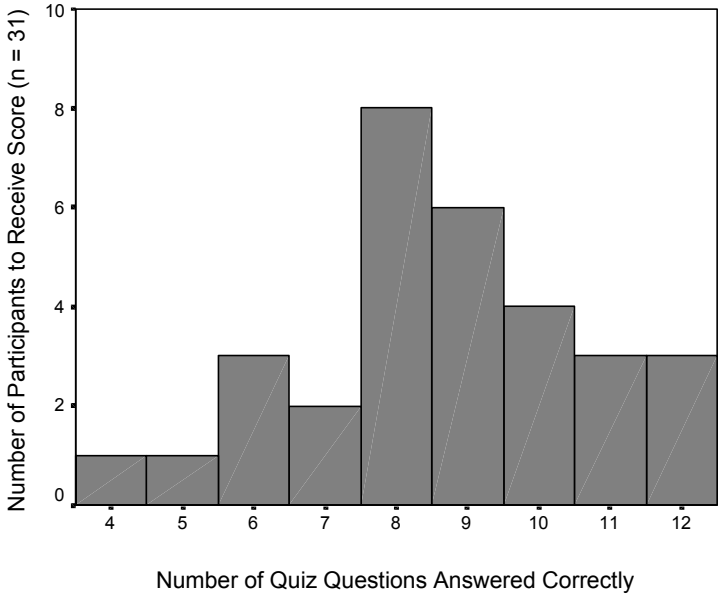


FIGURE 4.2: Frequency Count of Coherence Workshop Quiz Scores Received by Workshop Participants (Mean Number Correct = 8.65, SD = 2.03).



Use of Quiz Scores as a Treatment Effect Check

Because so few participants fulfilled all the research conditions (attendance at both workshops and researcher access to both of their papers) to be included in experimental comparisons (note that the smallest group, those exposed to the coherence workshop prior to their first paper and the special *topoi* workshop prior to their second, consists of only nine participants), removing the data for papers by participants who received low scores on the workshop quizzes would reduce the groups to sizes inappropriate for conducting MANOVAs. That said, removing the data related to the four participants who scored lower than 33.3% (answering four or less correctly) on the workshop quizzes yielded no significant results from Within Subjects and Between Subjects Repeated Measure MANOVAs. Only the control groups significantly changed over time, receiving lower raters' scores on their second papers: $F(1,46) = 5.98$, $p < 0.018$. Moreover, no correlation was found between the number of workshop quiz questions answered correctly and paper grades or raters' scores. In a further attempt to assess any relationship between participants' performance on the workshop quizzes and evaluation of subsequent writing, the data for the treatment group was divided into two groups. The workshop group was divided into high and low coherence groups by a median split on the Coherence Quiz scores. The grades and raters' scores for these groups appear in Table 8. They do not differ significantly between groups or over time: $F(4,22) = 0.699$, $p = 0.601$. The data was also divided into high and low special *topoi* groups by a median split on the Special *Topoi* Quiz scores. The grades and raters'

scores for these groups also appear in Table 4.8. They do not differ significantly between groups or over time: $F(4,29) = 2.22$, $p = 0.91$.

TABLE 4.8: Average Rater Assigned Scores and TA Assigned Grades for the Papers by Participants in the Experimental Group Subdivided into Groups According to Workshop Quiz Scores. The median score, the division point between high and low scorers, for both groups was 9 (out of 12). The raters scores on 7-point Likert-type scales were combined to create scores on a 14-point scale. The TAs used a letter grading scale with + and – grades, which I converted into its 4-point numeric equivalent. Frequently the TAs assigned a "split" grade, such as "B-/C+," and in such cases, I used the mean of both grades to calculate one numeric grade for each paper.

	First Paper				Second Paper			
Median Split Group	**Overall Score**	**Argument Score**	**Coherence Score**	**Paper Grade**	**Overall Score**	**Argument Score**	**Coherence Score**	**Paper Grade**
High Coherence (*n* = 15)	8.27 (2.46)	8.13 (7.43)	8.07 (2.09)	2.54 (0.99)	7.07 (2.46)	6.87 (2.67)	8.13 (2.03)	2.65 (1.04)
Low Coherence (*n* = 14)	7.36 (3.03)	7.43 (3.23)	7.36 (2.68)	2.35 (1.04)	7.07 (3.34)	7.21 (3.51)	7.29 (2.97)	1.96 (1.08)
High Special *Topoi* (*n* = 19)	7.89 (2.51)	8.58 (1.50)	8.58 (1.50)	2.31 (0.84)	7.00 (2.72)	6.95 (2.91)	7.86 (1.98)	2.55 (0.96)
Low Special *Topoi* (*n* = 16)	8.19 (3.53)	7.44 (3.01)	7.44 (3.01)	2.60 (1.35)	7.61 (3.35)	7.56 (3.33)	7.89 (2.81)	2.11 (1.23)

Students' Perceptions of Workshops

Table 4.9 presents the mean results of the section of the Perception Questionnaire which asked respondents to rate their understanding, enjoyment, and the helpfulness of the "Writing About Literature" and "Writing Coherently" workshops. T-tests indicate there is no statistically significant difference between respondents'

perceptions of the two workshops but that they did perceive themselves as understanding the workshops significantly more than they enjoyed them or found them helpful in writing their papers, $p < .001$. Table 4.10 presents the mean results of the section of the Perception Questionnaire which asked respondents to compare the usefulness of the workshops to other learning resources they may have used when writing their papers. Respondents rated the workshops as slightly more useful than the professor's lectures and discussion with classmates and slightly less useful than teacher conferences, discussion section meetings, and individual consultations at the undergraduate writing center. 39 respondents answered the questionnaire's final question and compared the usefulness of the "Writing About Literature Workshop" to the "Writing Coherently Workshop." These respondents gave the "Writing About Literature Workshop" a mean comparative rating of 4.31 (SD = 1.49) on the same 7-point Likert-type scale, indicating they found it only slightly more useful when writing their two required papers.

TABLE 4.9: Results of the Perception Questionnaire: Mean student ratings (with standard deviations) of each workshop on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = none, 4 = neutral, 7 = very high).

Criteria	Special *Topoi* Workshop (n = 49)	Coherence Workshop (n = 46)
Understanding	5.29 (1.15)	5.52 (1.21)
Enjoyment	4.55 (1.24)	4.33 (1.25)
Helpfulness	4.39 (1.63)	4.33 (1.55)

TABLE 4.10: Results of the Perception Questionnaire: Mean ratings (with standard deviations) of students' comparisons of the two intervention workshops with other, typical learning resources on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = much less useful, 4= about the same, 7 = much more useful).

Other Learning Resource	Number of Respondents Who Reported Using Other Learning Resource (n)	Comparative Rating of Workshops' Usefulness in Writing Papers
Professor's Lectures	54	4.63 (1.48)
Discussion with Classmates Outside of Class	37	4.22 (1.93)
Teacher Conference	48	3.79 (1.35)
Discussion Section	53	3.74 (1.36)
Undergraduate Writing Center	26	3.38 (1.88)

Discussion of Students' Perceptions of Workshops

The respondents claim to have moderately well understood both workshops and found them not unhelpful or unpleasant, but also not highly enjoyable or useful. While it may be understandable that the students found the workshops to be more useful than talking with their classmates informally, it is interesting to note that they rated the workshops as slightly more useful than the professor's lectures. One sensible explanation for this may be that the workshops specifically addressed their paper writing strategies while the professor's lectures provided more implicit rhetorical instruction through modeling. One student's comment on the questionnaire supports this understanding: "regarding the actual starting point and structure" the workshops were more helpful, but for "the content" the lectures were more helpful. Of those that elected to write comments on the questionnaire, one student wrote a positive comment

on the coherence workshop specifically, saying it helped the style of his or her first paper, and four students commented negatively on the coherence workshop, saying it was too rushed, mundane, or beneath their level of skill. Three students wrote comments that were highly positive regarding the special *topoi* workshop, saying it helped them organize their thoughts and start their papers; two students wrote comments negative of the special *topoi* workshop specifically, one saying it was rushed and confusing and the other that it was beneath his or her level of skill. Four students wrote comments praising the helpfulness of both workshops collectively, and three students wrote comments criticizing both workshops by saying they were too short, boring, and more appropriate for students in high school. Those students who wrote positive comments about the workshops indicate their accurate perception of the canons of rhetoric to which the strategies each workshop presented belongs: Writing About Literature to the canon of invention and Writing Coherently to the canon of style. One student's comment, which I quote in full below, quite suitably describes the workshops as formalizing what he or she had been previously, tacitly trained in:

> The theory is nice. However I didn't see it as doing anything except give a formal name to something I already (intuitively/in a trained fashion) knew how to do. I do see this as potentially valuable to teach at a lower level. Even though I rated it seemingly low, it is not to be understood as a reflection on the quality of the material, but rather of its application to my own personal writing. I do believe your theory is both good and

correct, although sometimes hard to apply due to the subjective nature of reading (making it an inherently very difficult problem to formalize).

Much like Weaver (1999), this student seems to question the appropriateness of abstracting formal precepts for application in a field which encourages novices to feel their own way.

Students' Use of Special *Topoi* and Coherence Strategies

Though the workshops may have failed to influence students' typical writing strategies for the class as a whole, the students' use of the coherence strategies and special *topoi* in their papers did indeed have an impact on their evaluation by the TAs and raters. When analyzed without regard to experimental condition, significant differences in grades and ratings did emerge between those students who employed, and employed more effectively, the five special *topoi* and three coherence strategies in their writing.

Number of Special Topoi Invoked. Table 4.11 presents the average rater-assigned Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and paper grades for all 161 papers when grouped according to the number of special *topoi* the papers invoked: none, one, two, or three topoi. Figure 4.3 presents these results in graphic form. A correlation between paper grades and the number of special *topoi* invoked was significant but rather low by Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients (0.20). The number of special *topoi* invoked were also correlated with the

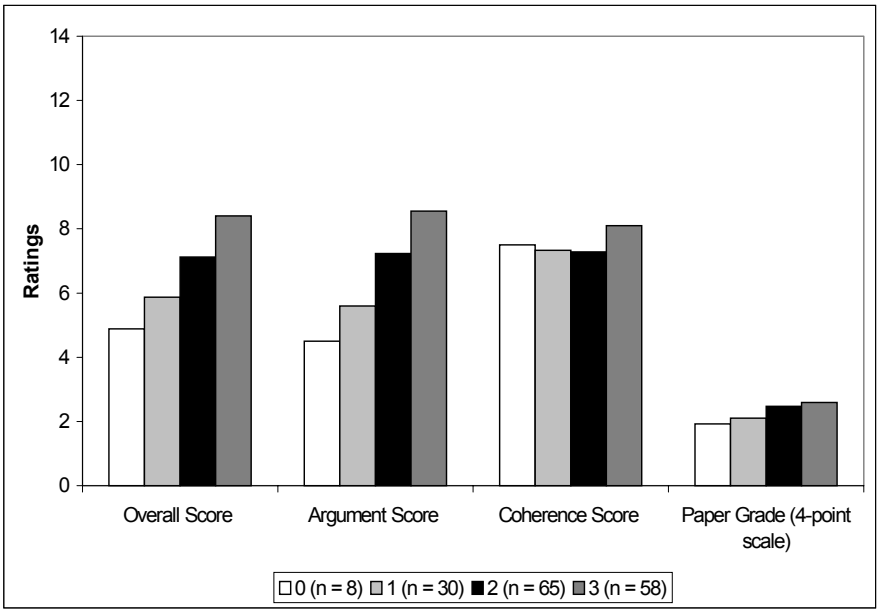
raters' Overall Quality Scores (0.38) and their Sophistication of Argument Scores (0.412).

As indicated in Figure 4.3, scores generally increased as the number of special *topoi* increased. This main effect of number of *topoi* was statistically significant in a 1 x 4 MANOVA: F (12, 468) = 3.021, $p < 0.001$. The raters' average Overall Quality scores were significantly higher for those papers that invoked three special *topoi* (8.40) than those who invoked two (7.12), one (5.87), and no special *topoi* (4.88), $p < 0.003$. Also, the raters' average Sophistication of Argument Scores were significantly higher for those papers that invoked three special *topoi* (8.55) than those who invoked two (7.23), one (5.60), and no special *topoi* (4.50), $p < 0.049$, and significantly higher for those papers that invoked two special *topoi* than those who invoked one and no special *topoi*, $p< 0.05$.

TABLE 4.11: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores (rater-assigned, 14-point scale) and Mean Paper Grades (TA assigned, 4-point scale) for All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Number of Special *Topoi* Invoked.

Number of Special *Topoi* invoked	Mean Overall Score	Mean Argument Score	Mean Coherence Score	Mean Paper Grade
0 (n = 8)	4.88 (1.46)	4.50 (2.14)	7.50 (1.20)	1.92 (0.77)
1 (n = 30)	5.87 (2.11)	5.60 (2.21)	7.33 (2.38)	2.10 (1.13)
2 (n = 65)	7.12 (2.98)	7.23 (3.06)	7.28 (2.67)	2.47 (0.88)
3 (n = 58)	8.40 (2.47)	8.55 (2.64)	8.10 (2.31)	2.59 (1.02)

Figure 4.3: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores (rater-assigned, 14-point scale) and Mean Paper Grades (TA assigned, 4-point scale) for All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Number of Special *Topoi* Invoked.



Number of Coherence Strategies Used. Table 4.12 presents the average rater-assigned Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and paper grades for all 161 papers when grouped according to the number of coherence strategies the papers invoked, none, one, or two or more (only two papers applied more than two coherence strategies). Figure 4.4 presents these results in graphic form. As was the case with the number of special *topoi*, the number of coherence strategies used was correlated with the raters' Overall Quality Scores (0.25) and their Sophistication of Argument Scores (0.21). However, in addition, the number of coherence strategies the papers evidenced was correlated with the raters' Coherence Scores (0.224).

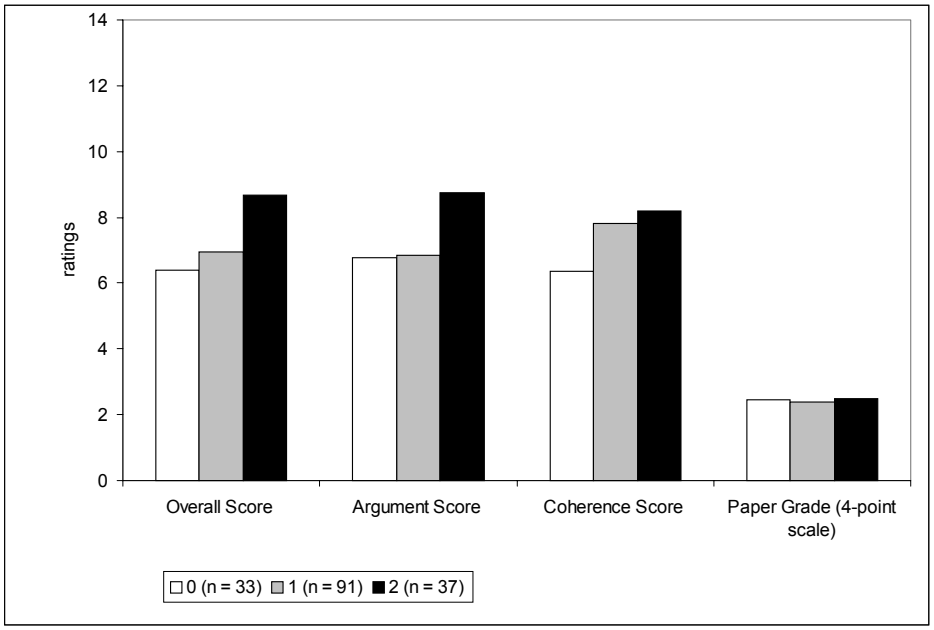
As indicated in Figure 4.4, scores generally increased as the number of coherence strategies increased. This main effect of number of coherence strategies was statistically significant in a 1 x 3 MANOVA: $F(8,312) = 3.363$, $p < 0.001$. The raters' average Overall Quality scores and Sophistication of Argument scores were significantly higher for those papers that exhibited two or more coherence strategies (8.68 and 8.76) than those that exhibited one (6.96 and 6.85) or no strategies (6.39 and 6.76), $p < 0.01$. The raters' scores for Coherence were significantly higher for those papers that exhibited one or more coherence strategies (7.80 and 8.19) than those that evidence none of the coherence strategies (6.36), $p < 0.02$.

Multivariate regressions indicated that the number of stases, special *topoi*, and coherence strategies used explains only 4.8% of the variability in paper grades, but 21.6% of the variability in the raters' Overall Quality Scores, 22% of the variability in raters' Sophistication of Argument Scores, and 6.6% of the variability in raters' Coherence Scores.

TABLE 4.12: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale) and Mean Paper Grades (TA Assigned, 4-point scale) for All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Number of Coherence Strategies Used.

Number of Coherence Strategies Used	Mean Overall Score	Mean Argument Score	Mean Coherence Score	Mean Paper Grade
0 ($n = 33$)	6.39 (2.55)	6.76 (2.68)	6.36 (2.64)	2.47 (0.89)
1 ($n = 91$)	6.96 (2.76)	6.85 (2.94)	7.80 (2.32)	2.37 (1.07)
2 or more ($n = 37$)	8.68 (2.51)	8.76 (2.86)	8.19 (2.26)	2.49 (0.88)

Figure 4.4: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale) and Mean Paper Grades (TA Assigned, 4-point scale) for All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Number of Coherence Strategies Used.



Though the number of special *topoi* and coherence strategies utilized had an effect on raters' scores only, significant differences emerged in paper grades as well when the quality of their use was a factor.

Quality of Special Topoi Invocation. Table 4.13 presents the average rater scores and grades assigned to papers when grouped according to the researcher-assigned Quality Score for the primary *topos* meeting the *topos* Definitional criteria, and Table 4.14 presents these same results for the researcher-assigned Complexity Quality Score for the primary *topos*. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 present these results in graphic form.

TABLE 4.13: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for the Primary *Topos* Invoked in All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Researcher-Assigned Definitional Criteria 7-point Score: Low = 1-2, Mid = 3-5, High = 6-7.

Primary Special *Topos* Definitional Score	Mean Overall Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Argument Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Coherence Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Paper Grade (TA Assigned, 4-point scale)
No Special *Topos* identifiable (*n* = 8)	4.88 (1.46)	4.50 (2.14)	7.50 (1.20)	1.92 (0.77)
Low (*n* = 23)	5.39 (2.21)	5.22 (2.17)	6.96 (2.36)	1.90 (0.94)
Mid (*n* = 73)	6.73 (2.52)	6.78 (2.67)	7.23 (2.55)	2.44 (0.94)
High (*n* = 57)	8.96 (2.50)	9.11 (2.64)	8.33 (2.35)	2.66 (1.02)

Figure 4.5: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for the Primary *Topos* Invoked in All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Researcher-Assigned Definitional Criteria 7-point Score: Low = 1-2, Mid = 3-5, High = 6-7.

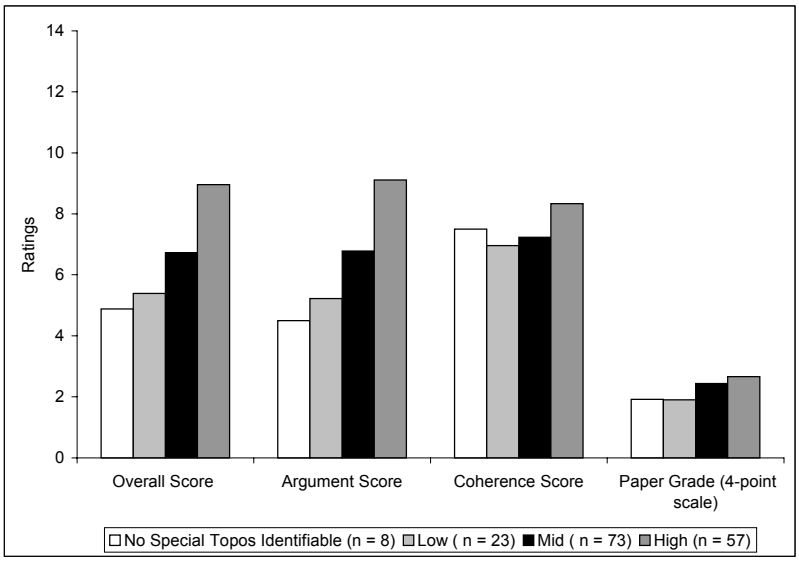
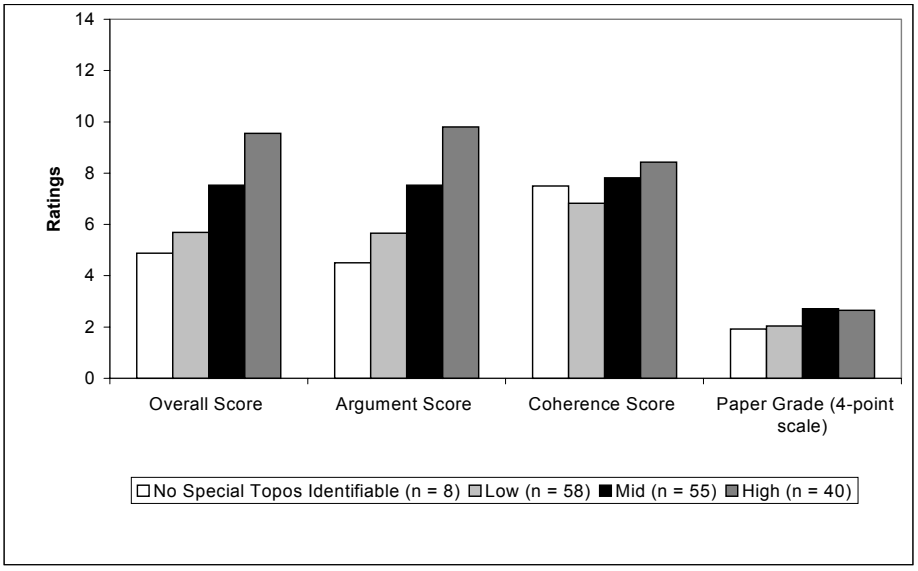


TABLE 4.14: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for the Primary *Topos* Invoked in All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Researcher-Assigned Complexity 7-point Score: Low = 1-2, Mid = 3-5, High = 6-7.

Primary Special *Topos* Complexity Score	Mean Overall Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Argument Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Coherence Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Paper Grade (TA Assigned, 4-point scale)
No Special *Topos* identifiable (*n* = 8)	4.88 (1.46)	4.50 (2.14)	7.50 (1.20)	1.92 (0.77)
Low (*n* = 58)	5.69 (2.31)	5.66 (2.23)	6.83 (2.52)	2.04 (0.98)
Mid (*n* = 55)	7.53 (2.47)	7.53 (2.65)	7.82 (2.42)	2.71 (0.86)
High (*n* = 40)	9.55 (2.21)	9.80 (2.49)	8.43 (2.30)	2.65 (1.02)

Figure 4.6: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for the Primary *Topos* Invoked in All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Researcher-Assigned Complexity 7-point Score: Low = 1-2, Mid = 3-5, High = 6-7.



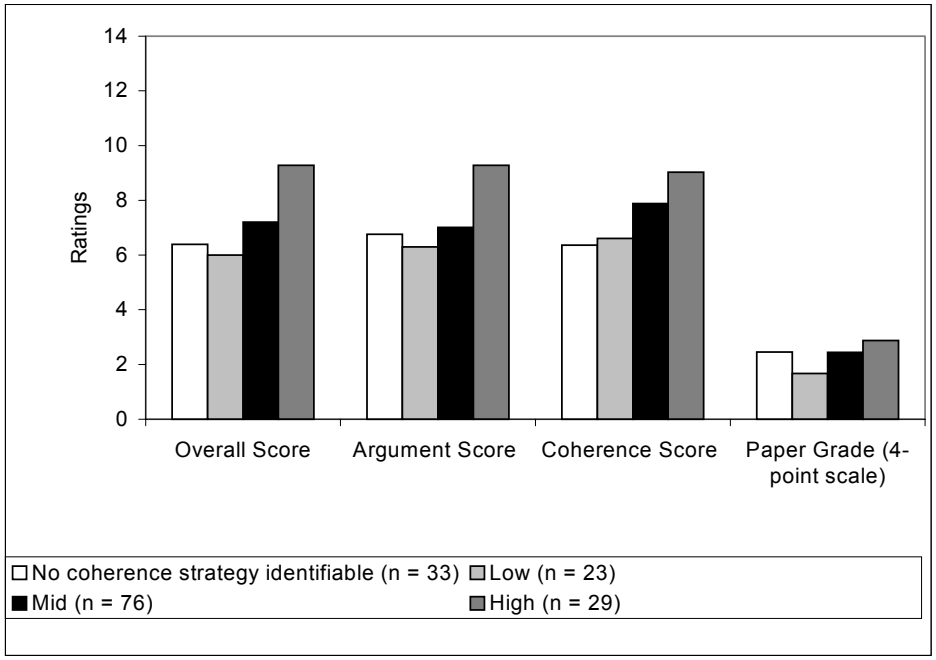
As Figures 4.5 and 4.6 indicate, raters' scores and grades increased the better the students' scores for primary special *topos* Definitional Quality and Complexity Quality. This main effect of primary special *topos* quality was statistically significant in 1 x 4 MANOVAs: $F\,(12, 468) = 4.627, p < 0.001$ for Definitional Quality and $F\,(12, 468) = 6.29, p < 0.001$ for Complexity Quality. Those papers with a primary *topos* receiving a high Definitional Quality Score received significantly higher paper grades (2.66) than did low scorers (1.90), $p < 0.01$, and significantly higher Overall Quality (8.96) and Sophistication of Argument Scores (9.11) than did all other papers (4.88-6.73 and 4.50-6.78), $p < 0.001$. As for the special *topos* Complexity Quality Scores, those papers receiving high and mid primary special *topos* Complexity Scores were assigned higher grades (2.65 and 2.71) than those receiving low primary special *topos* Complexity Scores (2.04), $p < .0.012$. The raters' Overall Quality and Sophistication of Argument Scores were significantly different between the high (9.55 and 9.80), mid (7.53 and 7.53), and low (5.69 and 5.66) primary special *topos* Complexity Scorers, $p < 0.001$, and those with no primary special *topos* (4.88) were significantly lower than those receiving high and mid primary special *topos* Complexity Scores, $p < 0.017$. The raters' Coherence Scores for the high primary special *topos* Complexity Scorers (8.43) were also significantly higher than the low primary special *topos* Complexity Scorers (6.83), $p < 0.008$. The pattern of higher paper grades, Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence scores associated with higher Definitional and Complexity Quality scores continues, and is statistically significant, when looking at the secondary and tertiary special *topoi*.

Quality of Coherence Strategies Application. Table 4.15 presents the average rater scores and grades assigned to papers when grouped according to the researcher-assigned "Flow" Quality Score for the primary coherence strategy. Figure 4.7 presents these results in graphic form.

TABLE 4.15: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for the Primary Coherence Strategy Used in All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Researcher-Assigned Facilitation of "Flow" 7-point Score: Low = 1-2, Mid = 3-5, High = 6-7.

Primary Coherence Strategy "Flow" Score	Mean Overall Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Argument Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Coherence Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Paper Grade (TA Assigned, 4-point scale)
No coherence strategy identifiable (*n* = 33)	6.39 (2.55)	6.76 (2.68)	6.36 (2.64)	2.46 (0.89)
Low (*n* = 23)	6.00 (2.59)	6.30 (2.95)	6.61 (2.35)	1.67 (0.96)
Mid (*n* = 76)	7.20 (2.55)	7.01 (2.76)	7.88 (2.15)	2.44 (0.93)
High (*n* = 29)	9.28 (2.80)	9.28 (3.07)	9.03 (2.13)	2.88 (0.97)

Figure 4.7: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for the Primary Coherence Strategy Used in All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Researcher-Assigned Facilitation of "Flow" 7-point Score: Low = 1-2, Mid = 3-5, High = 6-7.



As Figure 4.7 indicates, grades and raters' scores increased the better the students' scores for primary coherence strategy "Flow" Quality. This main effect of primary coherence strategy quality was statistically significant in a 1 x 4 MANOVA: F (12, 468) = 4.202, $p < 0.001$. Those papers with a low primary coherence strategy Flow Quality score received significantly lower grades (1.67) than those with mid (2.44) and high (2.88) Flow Scores, $p < 0.004$, though these low scorers received significantly lower grades than did those papers with no coherence strategies exhibited (2.46), $p < 0.011$. The high primary coherence strategy Flow Quality Scorers received high raters'

Coherence Scores (9.03) than did the low Flow Quality scorers (6.61), $p < 0.001$, and the high and mid scorers received higher Coherence Scores (9.03 and 7.88) than those papers exhibiting none of the three coherence strategies (6.36), $p < 0.01$. And the high primary coherence strategy facilitation of Flow scorers also received significantly higher raters' Overall Quality (9.28) and Sophistication of Argument Scores (9.28) than did the mid (7.20 and 7.01) and low scorers (6.00 and 6.30), $p < 0.004$. The pattern of higher paper grades, Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence scores associated with higher "Flow" Quality scores continues, and is statistically significant, when looking at the secondary coherence strategies.

It is also possible to examine whether the TAs and raters preferred particular special *topoi* and coherence strategies and whether participants were more adept at utilizing particular special *topoi* and coherence strategies.

TA and Rater Preference of Special Topoi. Tables 4.16-4.18 present the average TA grades, raters' Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence Scores, and researcher's Definitional and Complexity Quality scores for the primary, secondary, and tertiary special *topoi* the participants employed. Figure 4.8 presents the paper grades and mean raters' scores for the primary special *topoi* in graphic form. 1 x 5 MANOVAs indicated a significant effect on these ratings for the primary special *topoi*: $F(20,620) = 2.399$, $p < 0.001$, and secondary *topos*: $F(20, 620) = 1.93$, $p < 0.009$. Tests of Between Subjects Effects further indicated an effect of tertiary special *topoi* on rater's Overall Quality Score: $F(5, 155) = 4.0$, $p < 0.002$, and Sophistication of

Argument Score: F (5, 155) = 4.208, $p < 0.001$. Though TA grades and researcher-assigned Quality Scores for the five special *topoi* did not differ significantly, there were significant effects on the raters' scores. For the primary special *topoi*, the raters in their Overall Quality Scores preferred those papers that invoked the paradigm *topos* (8.47) over the social justice *topos* (6.33) and those that did not invoke a special *topos* (4.88), $p < 0.015$. In their Sophistication of Argument Scores, the raters' preferred again the paradigm *topos* (9.00) to the social justice (6.57) and ubiquity *topoi* (6.28) and those that did not invoke a special *topos* (4.50), $p < 0.02$. For the secondary special *topoi*, the raters in their Overall Quality and Sophistication of Argument scores preferred those papers that invoked the social justice(7.97 and 7.94), ubiquity (7.60 and 7.72), and appearance reality *topoi* (7.68 and 8.08) to those that did not invoke a special *topos* (5.66 and 5.37), $p < 0.025$. And for the tertiary special *topoi*, the raters in their Overall Quality and Sophistication of Argument scores preferred those papers that invoked the ubiquity *topos* (9.00 and 8.95) to those that did not invoke a special *topos* (6.58 and 6.54), $p < 0.008$.

TABLE 4.16: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), Researchers' Scores for Special *Topos* Meeting Definitional Criteria and Complexity (7-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Primary *Topos*.

Primary Special *Topos*	Overall Score	Argument Score	Coherence Score	Definitional Score	Complexity Score	Paper Grade
Appearance/ reality (n = 62)	7.73 (2.71)	7.56 (2.84)	8.03 (2.39)	4.23 (1.88)	3.40 (2.18)	2.43 (0.94)
Social Justice (n = 42)	6.33 (2.98)	6.57 (3.16)	7.02 (2.52)	4.62 (1.99)	3.64 (2.40)	2.34 (1.13)
Paradigm (n = 30)	8.47 (2.22)	9.00 (2.46)	7.23 (2.53)	4.87 (1.72)	4.30 (1.80)	2.65 (0.94)
Ubiquity (n = 18)	6.67 (2.72)	6.28 (2.47)	7.94 (2.62)	5.22 (1.63)	3.78 (2.16)	2.26 (0.92)
Paradox (n = 1)	7.00	6.00	10.00	2.00	3.00	3.85
No special *topos* identifiable (n = 8)	4.88 (1.46)	4.50 (2.14)	7.50 (1.20)	---	---	1.92 (0.77)

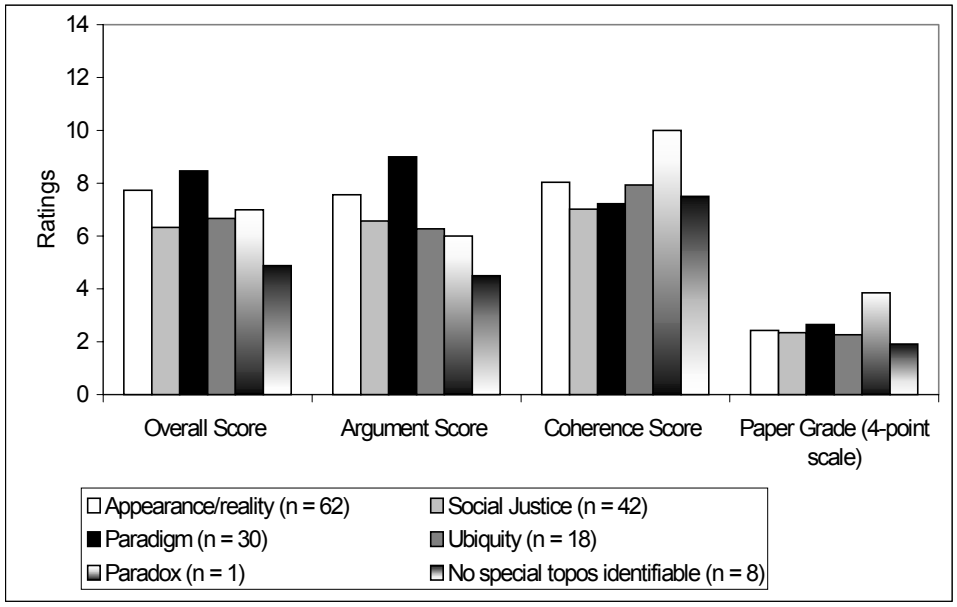
TABLE 4.17: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), Researchers' Scores for Special *Topos* Meeting Definitional Criteria and Complexity (7-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Secondary *Topos*.

Secondary Special *Topos*	Overall Score	Argument Score	Coherence Score	Definitional Score	Complexity Score	Paper Grade
Appearance/ reality (n = 37)	7.68 (3.35)	8.08 (3.33)	7.30 (3.01)	4.22 (1.90)	3.89 (2.25)	2.47 (1.07)
Social Justice (n = 34)	7.97 (2.76)	7.94 (2.86)	7.62 (2.44)	4.71 (1.83)	4.26 (2.02)	2.57 (0.85)
Paradigm (n = 11)	7.73 (2.24)	7.55 (2.73)	7.82 (2.18)	3.64 (1.57)	3.91 (2.26)	2.68 (0.89)
Ubiquity (n = 40)	7.60 (2.56)	7.72 (2.75)	7.98 (2.27)	4.60 (1.65)	3.82 (2.09)	2.51 (0.96)
Paradox (n = 1)	6.00	5.00	9.00	5.00	2.00	1.85
No special *topos* identifiable (n = 38)	5.66 (2.02)	5.37 (2.21)	7.37 (2.17)	---	---	2.06 (1.06)

TABLE 4.18: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), Researchers' Scores for Special *Topos* Meeting Definitional Criteria and Complexity (7-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Tertiary *Topos.*

Tertiary Special *Topos*	Overall Score	Argument Score	Coherence Score	Definitional Score	Complexity Score	Paper Grade
Appearance/ reality (n = 11)	7.91 (2.47)	8.55 (2.84)	7.36 (1.75)	4.64 (1.29)	4.45 (1.57)	2.66 (1.11)
Social Justice (n = 21)	7.86 (2.74)	7.90 (2.83)	8.00 (2.93)	4.57 (1.47)	4.19 (1.60)	2.62 (1.01)
Paradigm (n = 3)	9.33 (2.08)	10.00 (1.00)	7.00 (1.73)	2.67 (1.53)	2.67 (1.53)	2.77 (0.64)
Ubiquity (n = 21)	9.00 (2.30)	8.95 (2.58)	8.81 (1.89)	4.81 (1.47)	4.38 (2.13)	2.54 (1.11)
Paradox (n = 2)	9.00 (1.41)	9.00 (1.41)	7.50 (2.12)	3.00 (2.83)	3.50 (3.54)	2.00 (0.00)
No special *topos* identifiable (n = 103)	6.58 (2.75)	6.54 (2.91)	7.31 (2.49)	---	---	2.32 (0.97)

Figure 4.8: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Primary *Topos*.



TA and Rater Preference of Coherence Strategies. Tables 4.19-4.20 present the average TA grades, raters' Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence Scores, and researcher's Flow Quality scores for the primary and secondary coherence strategies the participants employed (again, only two papers employed a tertiary coherence strategy). Figure 4.9 presents the paper grades and mean raters' scores for the primary coherence strategies in graphic form. Tests of Between Subjects Effects indicated an effect of primary coherence strategies on raters' Overall Quality Scores: F (3, 157) = 3.022, $p < 0.031$, and on their Coherence Scores: F (3, 157) = 4.065, $p < 0.008$, and an effect of secondary coherence strategies on raters' Overall Quality scores: F (3, 157) = 5.009, $p < 0.002$, and their Sophistication of Argument

scores: F (3, 157) = 4.835, $p < 0.003$. As with the special *topoi*, TA grades and researcher-assigned Quality Scores did not significantly differ for the three coherence strategies, but the raters' scores did exhibit significant differences. For the primary coherence strategies, the raters in their Overall Quality scores preferred those papers that utilized the topic hand-off strategy (8.75) to those papers that evidenced none of the three coherence strategies (6.39), $p < 0.032$, and in their Coherence Scores preferred those papers that utilized the same subject (7.79) and topic hand-off (8.38) strategies to those papers that evidenced none of the three coherence strategies (6.36), $p < 0.037$. For the secondary coherence strategies, the raters in their Sophistication of Argument Scores preferred those papers that utilized the topic hand-off strategy (8.93) to those papers that evidenced none of the three coherence strategies (6.82), $p < 0.047$.

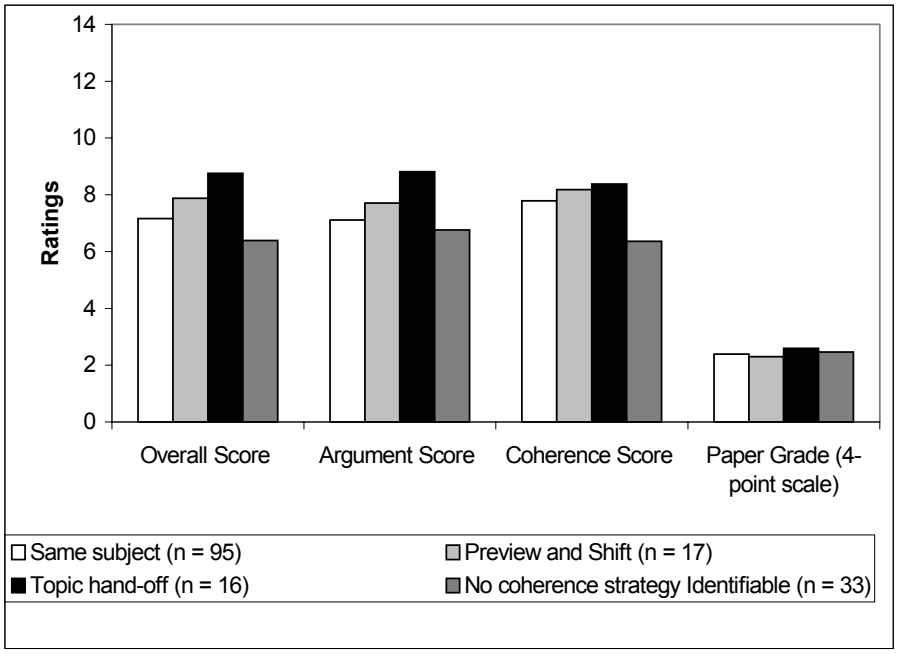
TABLE 4.19: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), Researchers' Scores for Coherence Strategy Facilitation of "Flow" (7-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Primary Coherence Strategy.

Primary Coherence Strategy	Overall Score	Argument Score	Coherence Score	"Flow" Score	Paper Grade
Same subject (n = 95)	7.16 (2.89)	7.11 (3.15)	7.79 (2.39)	4.14 (1.62)	2.39 (1.07)
Preview and Shift (n = 17)	7.88 (2.64)	7.71 (2.62)	8.18 (2.16)	4.35 (1.77)	2.30 (0.89)
Topic hand-off (n = 16)	8.75 (2.14)	8.81 (2.40)	8.38 (1.89)	4.62 (1.54)	2.59 (0.83)
No coherence strategy identifiable (n = 33)	6.39 (2.55)	6.76 (2.68)	6.36 (2.64)	---	2.46 (0.89)

TABLE 4.20: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), Researchers' Scores for Coherence Strategy Facilitation of "Flow" (7-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Secondary Coherence Strategy.

Secondary Coherence Strategy	Overall Score	Argument Score	Coherence Score	"Flow" Score	Paper Grade
Same subject (*n* = 16)	8.25 (2.38)	8.19 (2.64)	7.81 (2.04)	4.19 (1.42)	2.21 (0.89)
Preview and Shift (*n* = 6)	9.67 (2.42)	9.83 (2.79)	8.67 (2.50)	4.83 (0.41)	2.60 (0.99)
Topic hand-off (*n* = 15)	8.73 (2.87)	8.93 (3.15)	8.40 (2.47)	4.80 (1.57)	2.74 (0.81)
No coherence strategy identifiable (*n* = 124)	6.81 (2.71)	6.82 (2.86)	7.42 (2.48)	---	2.39 (0.99)

Figure 4.9: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence (14-point scale), and TA-assigned Paper Grades (4-point scale) for the Participant's Papers Groups by Primary Coherence Strategy.



Lastly, the stasis issues the papers addressed can be examined to determine if the TAs and raters preferred some stases over others and if students who addressed multiple stasis issues resulted in lower evaluations, perhaps due to their lack of focus in such a short paper, or in higher evaluations, perhaps due to their wide-reaching ambitions.

Analysis of Stases. Table 4.21 presents the average raters' scores and TA grades of those papers that addressed one, two, and three or more stases. Contrary to the two possible scenarios speculated above, students did not receive significantly higher or lower scores and grades of they addressed fewer or more stases in their papers as indicated by a 1 x 3 MANOVA: F (8, 312) = 0.463, p = 0.882. Table 4.22 presents the average raters' scores and TA grades assigned to papers according to the primary stasis issue each paper addressed. A Test of Between Subjects Effects revealed significant effects on the raters' Overall Quality Scores: F (4, 156) = 3.768, $p < 0.006$, and Sophistication of Argument Scores: F (4, 156) = 4.04, $p < 0.004$. For both their Overall Quality and Sophistication of Argument Scores the raters preferred those papers that primarily addressed the definitional stasis (7.76 and 7.88) over those papers that primarily addressed the evaluative stasis (6.00 and 5.72), $p < 0.041$. No significant effects of the secondary and tertiary stases were found.

TABLE 4.21: Average Overall Quality, Argument Sophistication, and Coherence Scores and Mean Paper Grades for All 161 Participant Papers Grouped by Number of Stasis Issues Addressed.

Number of Stases addressed	Mean Overall Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Argument Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Coherence Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Paper Grade (TA Assigned, 4-point scale)
1 (*n* = 54)	7.28 (3.00)	7.35 (3.18)	7.63 (2.74)	2.26 (0.94)
2 (*n* = 64)	7.23 (2.83)	7.28 (3.03)	7.66 (2.38)	2.50 (0.96)
3 (*n* = 43)	7.19 (2.49)	7.14 (2.64)	7.47 (2.21)	2.47 (1.08)

TABLE 4.22: Average Raters' Scores for Overall Quality, Sophistication of Argument, and Coherence and TA-assigned Paper Grades for the Participant's Papers Groups by Primary Stasis Issue Addressed.

Primary Stasis	Mean Overall Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Argument Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Coherence Score (Rater Assigned, 14-point scale)	Mean Paper Grade (TA Assigned, 4-point scale)
Fact (*n* = 1)	3.00	3.00	5.00	2.70
Definition (*n* = 96)	7.76 (2.83)	7.88 (2.90)	7.71 (2.64)	2.44 (1.03)
Cause (*n* = 29)	7.28 (2.28)	7.21 (2.81)	8.03 (2.16)	2.37 (0.79)
Evaluation (*n* = 25)	6.00 (2.57)	5.72 (2.79)	7.36 (1.98)	2.30 (1.03)
Proposal (*n* = 10)	5.60 (2.76)	5.9 (2.85)	6.10 (1.97)	2.59 (1.18)
No stasis identifiable (*n* = 0)	---	---	---	---

Discussion of Students' Use of Special *Topoi*, Coherence Strategies, and Stases

Ultimately these various analyses indicate that use of the special *topoi* of literary criticism and of strategies for improving written coherence are both influential factors in the evaluation of student writing. Though the number of special *topoi* and coherence strategies used had an influential effect only on the raters' scores, it is interesting to note that both had an effect on the Overall Quality and Sophistication of Argument Scores, while only the number of coherence strategies used had a significant impact on the raters' Coherence Scores. Simply put, the more numerous the special *topoi* and coherence strategies evident in a paper, the more highly the raters assessed its argument. And when the quality of the application of the special *topoi* and coherence strategies is considered, their presence in papers had a significant impact on the TAs' evaluation as well. Again simply put, those participants whose applications of the special *topoi* were more in keeping with the definitional criteria of the *topoi* and the literary critics' value of complexity were more likely to receive higher TA and raters' evaluations of their papers. Likewise, those participants who were more adept at facilitating the "flow" of their writing were more likely to receive higher TA and raters' evaluations of their papers. The significant, positive, but low correlation of number of special *topoi* invoked with paper grades suggests only a slightly greater weight given to the special *topoi* in the TAs' evaluation. Clearly, though, both invoking the warrants of the discourse community of literary critics and generally "writing well" are rhetorical strategies valued and rewarded in students' written arguments.

As for preferences among the different special *topoi* and coherence strategies, only one emerged: the raters appeared to prefer those papers which primarily applied the paradigm *topos* over the other special *topoi*. As the primary *topos* applied in a paper, the paradigm *topos* commonly acts as a frame for the entire argument. Within this sample of 161 papers, most applications of the paradigm *topos* consisted of students matching theories extracted from assigned readings in literary criticism, most frequently Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity," to another assigned literary text such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," Anne Bradstreet's "The Prologue," or Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time*. Such a maneuver clearly resembles a common rhetorical strategy applied by members of the professional discourse community of literary scholars, and the raters' preference for it would seem to indicate their appreciation for the attempt to emulate a scholarly practice. Likewise, though no differences in TA and rater evaluations emerged in the number of stasis issues addressed in the participants' arguments, the raters' preference for those papers that primarily addressed the definitional over the evaluative stasis can again be interpreted as the raters' favoring the student's attempts to emulate the conventions of the professional discourse community. Within the sample of 161 papers, those that primarily addressed the evaluative stasis frequently praised or criticized one of the assigned texts or authors. In doing so, these students appeared to follow more the conventions of book and film reviews than current literary criticism, which tends to direct such critique more at the scholarly discourse surrounding cultural and literary

texts in an attempt to establish exigency for further contributions to the discourse than at the literary texts themselves, the value of which may be assumed. Additionally, the participants' general gravitation to the definitional stasis in their arguments (for the primary stasis addressed, 59.63% of the papers in the sample of 161 evidenced the definitional stasis) also mirrors the conventions of professional literary criticism. In my analysis in Chapter 2 of a recent sample of professional journal articles in this field, the majority of the arguments focused on addressing issues of definition.

Conclusion

Despite the lack of its intervention's success, this study does shed light on how members of an academic disciplinary discourse community respond to the discourse of nonmembers. It appears the professor of this course is both right and wrong in his assessment of what is valued in student writing in his course. Yes, coherence, a widely-valued textual feature the importance of which the professor repeatedly emphasized to students, is valued in their writing. But discipline-specific rhetorical features are valued as well, despite the professor's stated desire that they not be. That these student writers' successful applications of rhetorical strategies from the canons of invention and style were rewarded upholds the counsel of so many rhetoricians to attend with care to each phase of composing and delivery. The results of this study also suggest that instructors of lower-level, introductory, or general education courses may not be fully aware of the extent to which their preference for the more embedded values and assumptions of their discipline influences their evaluation of student writing. As a consequence, such

courses may be a site where invitations to participate in the disciplinary discourse community are tacitly made and taken up or rejected, all with little conscious attention. Thus this study supports an understanding of "general education" or introductory undergraduate coursework as indeed disciplinary, even when that is not the stated objective of the instructor or institution offering the course. This is because it appears members of academic disciplinary discourse communities cannot so easily discard assumptions their community shares in another forum. Likewise, it appears such introductory coursework is far from being another forum altogether. It may be more accurate to envision hierarchic academic disciplinary discourse communities as ringed by a highly permeable boundary, and in forums such as undergraduate introductory coursework, "nonmembers" participate, however tentatively, in the discourse community.

That Teaching Assistants all in their early years of graduate study served as the judges of the rhetorical success of the students' arguments in their grading of the papers only serves to underscore this view of an academic discourse community. As was the case during my earlier observational study, the TAs' met weekly with the professor in a separate course on pedagogy in which considerable time was spent discussing grading of papers and working together to rate sample papers holistically. I believe this separate course on pedagogy served to "calibrate" the TAs idiosyncratic grading practices towards the professor's goals for the course. Thus unlike in other large courses in which there can be a high level of disconnect between the grading criteria a professor communicates to students and the criteria the TA actually applies (see Nelson, 1990),

the grading practices in this course should largely have been in accord. However, undoubtedly individual preferences and previous experiences still infused these practices, and the subtle differences among seven different grading practices may have obscured some pertinent differences among papers in the analyses I conducted in which I compared paper grades. That said, I strongly suspect that those who elect to pursue graduate study in English were very likely those undergraduates among the best at intuiting the assumptions of the field and gravitated toward the field in part because of an attraction to the values these assumptions bespeak. Thus the TAs' preference for those papers that best applied the special *topoi* should come as no surprise. However, more research could be done on graduate students' acquisition of the embedded conventions of their chosen field to build on the fascinating work begun by Carol Berkenkotter, Thomas Huckin, and John Ackerman (1988), Torrance, Thomas, and Robinson (1994), Paul Prior (1995), and Blakeslee (1997). Do their grading practices vary with further study and enculturation, for instance?

Whether the special *topoi* of literary criticism, or of other disciplines for that matter, can be effectively taught to novices by explicitly calling attention to their use remains an unresolved issue. The failure of the intervention workshops in this study could lend support to theories of situated learning; perhaps such traditionally buried disciplinary assumptions can only transmitted tacitly and through repetition and reinforcement, two features the design of this study did not facilitate. However, the constraints under which the intervention workshops were conducted may be the primary causes for their failure. That the Coherence Workshop, which presented strategies that

several composition textbooks and instructors regularly call explicit attention to in their presumably successful instruction[1] was no more successful than the Writing About Literature Workshop would seem to indicate that the time constraints, workshop format, and lack of repetition and reinforcement were the main causes for the workshops' failure. Those instances during my observational study in which I observed TAs successfully instructing students in how to apply the special *topoi* in their papers suggest that not only individual attention and more time but a shift in instructional focus from how to recognize the special *topoi* to how to apply the special *topoi* may yield more successful results. Joanna Wolfe (In preparation) describes her experience teaching an introductory literature course in which she used repeated reinforcement and a variety of techniques to help students recognize and apply the special *topoi* Fahnestock and Secor identified. Her rich techniques, such as use of think aloud protocols of "experts" reading literature and extensive student conferences, were received very positively by students, and Wolfe was pleased with their resulting essays. An intervention that could afford greater time to apply some of Wolfe's strategies is warranted, as is a study design that yields larger group sizes.

Additionally, the results of this study suggest future research ought to seek to uncover the special *topoi* of other disciplines as these embedded assumptions of values and methods of practice could explain much of the more surface differences (and

[1] Joseph Williams and Gregory Colomb (1993) cite their students' self-reports of improved clarity and organization in their writing after rhetorical instruction in stylistic techniques that included the strategies presented in my Coherence Workshop as evidence that students "value, and maybe even profit from, explicit instruction in fine-grained, explicit principles of writing" (p. 258).

disagreements) among disciplines. Investigations into how members of these disciplinary discourse communities respond to the discourse they solicit from nonmembers daily in classrooms could reveal information fruitful for improving pedagogical practices, particularly writing instruction. The oft-repeated complaint that students should have acquired all the academic writing conventions they need in a first-year composition course can be best responded to, I believe, by our increased awareness of how diverse, numerous, and entirely subtle many of these conventions are across disciplines. Though elements of style such as strategies for writing coherently may be effectively introduced in a composition course and useful to a student in their writing for many different courses, the inventional special *topoi* of each discipline they may encounter may be too numerous to expect to cover in such a course and, as this attempt at interventional instruction shows, may not be effectively taught as out-of-context abstractions.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters suggest an understanding of literary studies as a disciplinary discourse community open to change and permeable at its boundaries, yet at the same time steadfast to a core set of values and rhetorical practices. The analyses of the first *PMLA* and a sample of recently published literary criticism in Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate the simultaneously progressive and conservative functions that stases and special *topoi* serve in this field's published discourse. In fact, these rhetorical conventions that speak to preferred values and methodologies may be what draws these practitioners of diverse critical approaches together as a discourse community. Certainly object of study, traditionally accepted as the differentiating factor among disciplines since the late nineteenth century, can no longer satisfactorily be seen as serving this function, particularly in light of the rise of cultural studies approaches within literary studies. Chapters 1 and 2 illustrate some of the ways rhetorical conventions such as special *topoi* are used to argue for revolutionary changes in the community while at the same time reaffirming certain core assumptions of the community—proposing a new theoretical perspective, for instance, by pointing to its potential to yield greater complexity. Thus the subtle strength of epideictic discourse, frequently discounted as the least powerful of the three Classical forums (forensic, deliberative, and epideictic), is depicted in these pages. The goal of epideictic to appeal to and at the same time mold audience values clearly plays a key role in preparing audiences to accept or reject proposals. The profound theoretical changes the discipline

of literary studies has embraced in the past century without entirely eroding or severing its sense as a discourse community may be viewed as a testament to the power of epideictic.

Still, the limits of the validity of the stasis and special *topoi* conventions of literary criticism should be investigated. For instance, as the professor of my studies presented in Chapters 3 and 4 suggested, some of the special *topoi* of literary studies may vitally function in other areas of the humanities, and thus the boundaries of disciplinary discourse communities may be less definite than I and others sometimes depict them. Perhaps different disciplines favor stases and special *topoi* in potentially overlapping ways and to varying degrees of adherence strength. Future analyses of professional discourse could seek to characterize these overlaps and levels of adherence to the frequently tacit values preferred by disciplinary discourse communities. For this purpose, the abstractions from Classical rhetoric that scholars such as Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor and Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca have applied in analyses of contemporary discourse continue to be useful.

In addition to clarifying the rhetorical functions of published literary criticism, the preceding chapters present evidence to support an understanding of student discourse in literature classrooms as provisionally participating in this disciplinary discourse community. Findings from the ethnographic study presented in Chapter 3 indicate that students enter their college classrooms with a surprisingly sophisticated ability to distinguish literary criticism from the discourse of other disciplines and forums. In Chapter 3 I also demonstrate that some instructors teach the conventions of

their discipline through modeling and, intermittently, explicating, their use. Findings from the intervention study presented in Chapter 4 indicate that students are rewarded for their successful use of professional conventions. This evidence contradicts characterizations of introductory literature instruction as either "pre" or "post" disciplinary. That argumentative writing is assigned in all the introductory literature courses that require papers at the institution I investigated, and that all these courses require exams, suggests that "postdisciplinary" pedagogies as described by Downing and Sosnoski (1995) have not found wide endorsement in this field. Instead, the evidence presented here supports an understanding of student discourse as "liminal discourse," or interactions at the periphery of a community of practice as described by Etienne Wenger (1999). Though Aviva Freedman, Christine Adam, and Graham Smart (1994) are correct to point out that power dynamics unique to classrooms do not vanish when students try on a professional ethos as part of their coursework, this circumstance does not necessarily invalidate the rhetorical skills students may gain as part of the process of molding such identities. Further, student participation can have legitimate, reciprocal effects among discourse community members further along the discipline's hierarchy. For instance, just as Paul Prior (1995) describes the significant, reciprocal influence that a graduate sociology student had on her professor during several response rounds when revising a paper, at least two of the students whose papers I analyzed in Chapter 3 were able to impress, if not persuade, their audience by using special *topoi* of literary criticism in arguments that directly challenged the readings of texts previously delineated by their professor and TAs. In "Will English Departments Become the

Classics Departments of the Twenty-first Century?" Thomas Miller observes that many recent disciplinary innovations in English departments such as cultural studies "have been institutionalized in general education courses before becoming part of the core of the major" precisely because of "the generative possibilities" of "work at the boundaries of the field of study where the educated culture is called upon to explain itself to relative outsiders." Perhaps, in time, we might see the rhetorically savvy arguments some students challenged their professor and TAs with in this course reverberate through and generate further disciplinary discourse through these scholars contributions at more advanced levels such as in conference papers and journal articles.

Thus future research on academic disciplinary discourse communities should take care to explore potential relationships between professional discourse and classroom discourse, as I and the few other researchers who have examined the "liminal" potentials of student discourse have attempted to do. It has long been understood that these communities are hierarchical; however, the first rung on their hierarchical ladders has typically been located in graduate school in our research, especially our research on disciplines in the humanities. Particularly in light of the steps many college professors have begun to take to avoid what Paulo Freire termed a "banking model" of education and involve undergraduates in the projects of their disciplines, we would be wise to question our own apparent assumptions concerning the nature of undergraduate coursework. That said, we also need to research other literature classrooms and classrooms at other types of institutions than the one I present here. It would be a mistake to generalize too far based on the observations of one professor's

pedagogical practices. We especially need to examine the nature of disciplinary acculturation at institutions that place less emphasis on the research contributions expected of their faculty and greater emphasis on pedagogical practice. And we need to explore disciplinary discourse in contexts outside of the classroom and journal articles. In what other ways and in what other arenas does this discourse community acculturate and communicate? In conferences, committee meetings, book reviews, informal hallway chats? Are students in this discipline as likely to develop apprentice-like relationships with faculty mentors outside of the classroom as they are in some sciences? Are these conventions employed and encouraged in these other arenas?

Together, the analyses of professional and classroom discourse in this dissertation complicate earlier depictions of this discourse community as particularistic, individualistic, and idiosyncratic (Bazerman, 1981; Carter, 1992; Fahnestock & Secor, 1988, 1991; MacDonald, 1994; Sosnoski, 1979). In its professional publications, it appears the discourse community is re-engaging several of the practices of a knowledge-building research community, the type of disciplinary community its first members, late nineteenth-century philologists, idealized. In particular, the careful attention paid to entering and engaging a scholarly discussion evident in the articles I analyzed in Chapter 2 suggests that the collective project of professional literary criticism is not so far removed from the social and natural sciences, namely the constructing and refining of explanatory theories in light of their application to objects of study. To be sure, these disparate disciplines do not share, or agree upon, methods for validating these applications. Though the persuasiveness of literary criticism stems

more from the ethos of the scholar, in contrast to the greater emphasis on logos generalizations over cases in the natural and social sciences, it is important to note the extent to which all these disciplinary communities engage in similar rhetorical strategies for constructing and contributing to academic "conversations." This raises a pertinent question for future research on the rhetorical nature of academic discourse: is this epistemic model a "proper" aim for all disciplines? In other words, is this "knowledge-building" conversation a criterion for defining "academic discipline"? Or might the history of shifts towards and away form this model in academic literary study instead make a case against this definitional criterion?

It currently appears that students are sometimes invited to participate in, however peripherally or tentatively, these conversations in literary studies. As we saw in Chapter 3, some students in introductory literature courses are assigned to read not only "primary" literary texts but also works of professional literary criticism and theory which they are encouraged to engage with paradigmatically and apply in their writing. In Chapter 2 I demonstrate how such applications of the paradigm *topos* are used by professional critics to refine and amend literary theories. This engagement of students in the conversation of the discipline that Chapters 3 and 4 document presents a challenge to Fahnestock and Secor's (1988; 1991) characterization of the discipline of literary studies as an enclosed, self-serving religious community. Instead of the celebrations of canonical texts Fahnestock and Secor saw in their sample of literary criticism from the early 1980s, I argue on the basis of a wider range of evidence that the epideictic function of this professional discourse lies in its shaping and affirmation of

community practices of interpretation. Thus, when presented in the context of a classroom, students, or "outsiders," are encouraged to practice and adopt these interpretive methods. In this forum, we can see the boundaries demarcating the discourse community are fluid. Consequently, as I speculate in Chapter 2, the wider political aspirations of this discourse community, evident in its adherence to a *topos* I labeled social justice, may not be undermined by the isolationism Fahnestock and Secor detected in the professional discourse community. Daily in classrooms professors present to students compelling arguments through literary interpretation that ask students to recognize the validity of multiple points-of-view, acknowledge legacies of injustice, and inspire deliberation for future action.

Thus what some literature professors may describe in their pedagogical practice as non-disciplinary or post-disciplinary[1] I am categorizing as indeed evidence of their attempts to inculcate students in their disciplinary values and rhetorical practices. I suspect that many literature professors who argue against introducing students to the discourse practices of their discipline do so as much or more so out of an association of disciplinarity with outmoded, largely New Critical methods as out of the "bourgeois story" of autonomous selfhood that Stanley Fish (1985) cites as the source of anti-professionalism. Meanwhile, the gap between these professors' professional and pedagogical practice seems actually not so wide as their arguments against inculcating students in disciplinary practices would suggest. In fact, it would seem that the

[1] Because David Shumway (1992) ties the concept of disciplinarity to object of study, a canon of texts, he describes his advocacy for teaching the methods of literary studies, an argument much like mine, as "postdisciplinary."

developments in the profession Richard Ohmann lauds in his most recent edition of *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* (1996), such as feminism, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and queer studies, would also be welcomed by him and other like-minded literary scholars in their classrooms. Thus I believe that if Ohmann and other literary scholars who have argued against the climate of disciplinary enculturation in higher education more accurately recognized that the assumptions and values they appeal to in their journal articles function as current conventions of their disciplinary discourse community, they would be less hostile to the idea of sharing these conventions with their students. In fact, the use of these conventions is likely already implicit in their pedagogy, as I illustrate in Chapter 3.

Moreover, it could be argued that those literature professors who resist introducing students to the conversations of their discipline are only further reifying aspects of disciplinarity they claim to object to, such as hierarchy and exclusive authority. Excluding students in the introductory literature course, the last literature course many students will ever take (as the professors I interviewed repeatedly reminded me), from examining not only what issues are at stake in literary studies but also how these issues are approached only leaves students in the dark about what literary scholarship is. It is no wonder, then, that we hear some students claim literature professors are highly, even unfairly, subjective graders whose interpretations of literature are idiosyncratic.

Thus I believe this dissertation makes needed contributions not only to "writing in the disciplines" research but also to the debate in literary studies over the place of

disciplinary practices in undergraduate education. For those who continue to maintain that the undergraduate literature classroom should not be a site of disciplinary enculturation, my research may help them become more aware of several deeply imbedded disciplinary conventions and assist them to make more conscious decisions about their role in their pedagogical practice. However, what I believe to be a more realistic and productive contribution of my research is support for those scholars such as Gerald Graff who argue for the inclusion of the content as well as the conventions of scholarly debate in literature classrooms. If literature professors are already implicitly introducing their students to disciplinary discourse conventions, I argue they could better serve their students through more conscious, explicit, and collaborative pedagogical practices.

For instance, Fish, for all his attention to and advocacy for the concept of interpretive communities, describes his own pedagogical practice as very traditional, performative, non-collaborative, and highly influenced by his own educational experiences (1994, pp. 285-288). He, then, like many professors, is likely circumventing opportunities for interactions across the lay/professional divide fruitful for both parties. By potentially hampering students' acquisition of rhetorical skills to make meaningful contributions to the discipline's discussions, these professors would seem to be instituting greater autocratic control over the interpretations accepted in the community.

Likewise, literature professors who do not recognize and treat their discourse as participating in disciplinary conversations may be denying their students further

opportunities to develop critical and rhetorical thinking, reading, and writing skills that may in fact be of use to them in situations outside of and beyond their current classroom experience. For instance, Cheryl Geisler (1994) has illustrated how students more acculturated to an academic discipline are better able to evaluate conflicting opinions in print and insert themselves into the debate, even when writing for a broad, magazine-reading public. It may be the case that a greater awareness of and sufficient opportunities to rehearse and try on professional identities in their coursework helps students negotiate other discourse communities by tuning into the *topoi* of the discussion and effectively employing the *topoi* in their behalf. According to James Seitz (1999), as a result of their experiments with such role playing, students can become further aware of the constructed nature of ethos in texts, even in those texts "that most assiduously attempt to locate themselves in the language of objectivity—an insight that can direct students toward more perceptive reading in addition to more flexible writing" (p. 9). And though his emphasis on achieving consensus has been justifiably critiqued for its disinterestedness, Kenneth Bruffee (1993) argues that students' provisional participation in disciplinary discourse communities which leads to their greater linguistic and rhetorical flexibility is ultimately what makes them "liberally educated" (p. 135). However, Geisler's finding and Seitz and Bruffee's claims deserve further investigation. Is there in fact a kind of rhetorical savvy that can be developed through theorizing a discourse community's interpretive and argumentative conventions before jumping into the fray? Can this savvy be developed by examining and tentatively entering any disciplinary discourse community? Or are some disciplines

better suited to equip these liminal participants with rhetorical skills transferable to other scenarios? The effects of disciplinary acculturation on students in arenas *outside* various disciplines ought to be investigated. Are students able to transfer the rhetorical skills of audience analysis and invention acquired in one situation to others? We have much to learn about students' rhetorical lives beyond individual classrooms and beyond graduation.

That said, introducing students to the kinds of questions explored in a disciplinary community, represented by the stases, and the warrants which support many of the claims made in the community, its special *topoi*, would seem to be particularly promising for instructors and students. The virtues of the stases and special *topoi* as rhetorical conventions is that they need not encourage production of discourse that is mechanistic, deterministic, or formulaic, textual qualities that are particularly antithetical to the values of the discipline of literary studies. As tools for invention, they should assist students in locating valid controversies and enlist their knowledge about their audience in effectively supporting their claims. But awareness of the stases and *topoi* preferred in a given rhetorical situation need not predetermine students' arguments any more than the preexisting and often unacknowledged relations of power do in the same situation. In fact, the ability to wield such inventional tools should increase students' ability to generate and select from many potential arguments (see Bilsky, McCrea, & Streeter, 1953; Fahnestock, 1993; Infante, 1971; Kirch, 1996).

However, more research is necessary to explore the generative, inventional capabilities of stases and special *topoi* for both students and professional scholars. This

dissertation and Fahnestock and Secor's analyses have attempted to demonstrate the analytic usefulness of the stases and special *topoi* in investigations of disciplinary discourse. Though these concepts were first discussed by rhetoricians as inventional tools and some research has suggested the generative usefulness of stases and *topoi*, research is needed to explore the actual role, if indeed there is one, of these concepts during composing processes. When and how do professional critics invoke them in the process of composing? While reading? When considering their audience? And can introducing students to these conventions as abstract concepts assist them in generating more rhetorically successful arguments?

Though the quick, unreinforced introductions to these abstractions I attempted in the study presented in Chapter 4 did not affect the rhetorical strategies students employed, instructional methods which allow students greater time to practice not only recognizing special *topoi* but using them to invent arguments may prove more successful. The innovative techniques Joanna Wolfe (In preparation) used in a literature course to incorporate the special *topoi* of literary criticism into the critical vocabulary of the class, such as her use of think-aloud protocols of "experts" reading literature, suggest other rich possibilities. Other practices that should support the kind of collaborative and rhetorical pedagogy I am advocating are suggested by the research presented here. By including some professional literary criticism on their syllabi, literature professors can provide students with rhetorical models for their writing. Additionally, and especially if some of the selections present opposing viewpoints, assigning some literary criticism may help some students recognize valid controversies

and provide them with an exigency and a discursive space into which they can insert their arguments. For instance, Graff and James Phelan's edition of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1995), which includes as "A Case Study in Critical Controversy" a selection of opposing critical viewpoints on the text, was used by many students in the literature course I observed to insert their views in the critical debate, sometimes with rather sophisticated applications of the "mistaken critic" *topos* I observed in professional discourse. In this course I also observed instructors successfully assist some students in using the special *topoi* of literary criticism through conferences, written feedback on interim drafts, and class discussion of stronger and weaker drafts, methods endorsed by decades of composition research. The professor's open acknowledgement with students that their audience is their TA also seems a step in the direction I am advocating, though his characterization of this audience as one with no preconceived opinions on the assigned texts seems a step back again.

What's more, since many professors likely reward students who appeal to the stases and *topoi* conventions of their field, as Chapter 4 illustrates, it may only be fair to articulate these usually tacit grading criteria. Susan Peck MacDonald (1994) argues that

> whenever qualitative judgments are made about writing, the only fair way to provide access to the rewards involved is to make explicit the principles on which such judgments are made. The lack of attention academics have paid to understanding textual practices in the social sciences and humanities is the best possible guarantee of capriciousness in the system of academic rewards. (p. 188)

The results of a survey presented in Chapter 3 attest that the better students were at recognizing the special *topoi* of literary criticism, the better they performed in an introductory literature course. Articulating stasis and *topoi* conventions may prove especially helpful for those students who are less adept at recognizing their tacit role in classroom discourse. As David Shumway (1992) points out, often these students' previous exposure to discursive practices may not have been as varied or sustained as their peers from more privileged social classes, leading him to declare that "we need to break down our prejudice in favor of the 'natural' student and tell students how they can learn to learn this stuff" (p. 106). Thus while my support for teaching disciplinary rhetorical conventions may appear to be a call to raise the level of difficulty and sophistication of the introductory literature course, such pedagogical practices may in fact make the course a less mystifying experience for a greater number of students.

Further, attuning to the *topoi* of disciplinary conversations in the classroom seems an effective way professors who root their pedagogy in one theoretical approach, such as Marxist criticism, can respond to the concerns over indoctrination, ideological coercion, and essentialism expressed by scholars such as Graff (1992, pp. 146-148), Robert Scholes (1998, pp. 150-154), and Shumway (1992, p. 99). When the proponents of a theoretical approach are viewed as a subdisciplinary community, to use MacDonald's (1994) term, then the scholarly questions and controversies pursued in their discourse can be highlighted in the classroom. Surely it would be a grave oversimplification to present all Marxist literary scholars, all feminist literary scholars, or even all New Critical scholars as in unified agreement on all issues before them.

Providing students the opportunity to rehearse the skills required to participate in these "subdisciplinary" conversations should empower them rhetorically while minimizing coercive effects. Scholes (1998) illustrates this possibility through the example of Louis Althusser's successful acquisition of the rhetorical conventions of philosophy facilitated by a teacher with whom Althusser vehemently disagreed (pp. 60-66).

However, it should be noted that my recommendation to teach disciplinary stasis and *topoi* conventions begs some questions about the role of "writing in the disciplines" research and about the role of instructors of introductory coursework. For instance, recognizing that instruction is a disciplinary practice, should a goal of "writing in the disciplines" research be to rehabilitate the practices of the disciplines they study? In other words, if followed, my recommendation could profoundly alter the discourse in literary studies by at best improving, facilitating, or broadening it—or at worst by rigidifying it. Is such change an outcome desired by rhetoricians? By literary scholars? And, if "writing in the disciplines" research is to contribute to disciplinary pedagogies, than in addition to research on how to incorporate effectively knowledge of rhetorical conventions into pedagogical practices, "writing in the disciplines" researchers might also consider exploring the resistances literature professors may have to employing these practices and how "writing in the disciplines" programs can best encourage and support them to do so. Correspondingly, what is the desired role of literature faculty and other instructors of introductory coursework? If conventions such as stases and special *topoi* have served in the past an implicit "gatekeeping" function by encouraging most the "natural" students to proceed further into advanced study, then perhaps this is

a function some might argue we should not discard without further examination. Put another way, a question my recommendation to facilitate and broaden participation in disciplinary discourse presumes is that the role instructors of introductory coursework ought to play is more tour guide than border guard. My recommendation does not consider institutional or professional pressures that may work against it and promote instead the border guard role. I raise these issues here if only to encourage future research and debate on their implications.

Another well-founded counter-argument that can be levied against my argument for more conscious sharing of disciplinary methods and conventions in introductory coursework is that these courses, particularly those in the humanities, should be sites for developing in students the skills needed to participate effectively as citizens in public discourse and debate. Some of my responses to this claim have already been articulated here. The critical and rhetorical thinking, reading, and writing skills developed when students are encouraged to analyze the rhetorical situation their writing enters in may be skills transferable to other situations, including more public forums. But especially because evidence indicates instructors are currently rewarding those students most adept at appealing to the conventions of their discipline, it seems misleading to describe these courses as they are currently taught as providing straightforward instruction in producing effective public discourse. Students were not asked to write for pubic audiences in any of the introductory literature courses I examined at one university. While I think some courses, such as those Rosa Eberly describes in *Citizen Critics: Literary Public Spheres* (2000), are effective at preparing students to participate in

public spheres of discourse and should be a vital part of students' educational experience, I do so in part because I actually see them as rhetorical "cousins" to the kind of disciplinary courses I am advocating. Eberly's conception of treating the classroom as a "protopublic space," a concept that emphasizes the need students have for a space to rehearse the rhetorical skills needed to engage in public discourse while conscientiously acknowledging the power dynamics of classrooms, shares much in common with my conception of students' discourse in introductory disciplinary courses functioning as "liminal discourse." However, the courses in which Eberly, a rhetorician, has treated the classroom as a protopublic space have been writing courses. In contrast, undergraduate literature courses taught by literary scholars, as my dissertation has argued, are inextricably disciplinary, no matter how tacit or openly acknowledged this state of things is.

However, I hope my dissertation has made clear that this state of things need not be a cause for dismay among rhetoricians or literary scholars, particularly if openly acknowledged to students, and especially if steps are taken to assist students in acculturating to liminal discourses. As Frederick Antczak (1985) has argued, the discourse of academic disciplines and public spheres do have significant consequences on and for each other. And of course, individuals can and do function in multiple discourse communities and public spheres. First and second-year undergraduates, in particular, are asked to shift between a great number of these communities and spheres throughout any given weekday. (That all are not made entirely dizzy by their movement from a science lab at one moment, in which they seek to reduce the apparent

complexity of their observations, to their paper for a literature class on their desktop at another moment, in which they seek to uncover greater and greater complexities, is worth noting). Emphasizing the potential for reciprocal exchange across these conceptual boundaries, Antczak argues that "disciplines must for their own survival attract and engage the best minds possible that they many in their turn probe and push their frontiers" (p. 204). Thus for Antczak, rhetorical, democratic education "is successful insofar as it frees the discipline to be all it can be—to be satisfying… for the human beings who animate and practice and extend it" (p. 204).

For literary studies in particular, professionalism has brought with it a level of security and a space needed to nourish perspectives alternative to the discourse dominating commercial media and public, political debate. Even Ohmann, in a footnote to *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* (1996), recognizes this benefit to the professionalism he otherwise faults. Because "within professional walls, mavericks and communists and critics of society can survive," Ohmann clarifies that "for people who want a democratic and egalitarian and socialist society, the moral of my analysis is not to destroy professional ramparts, but to reach out over them" (p. 252). Fish, who had been derogatorily labeled a sophist in an essay in *The New Criterion*, subsequently embraced the category as a helpful historical reference to explain the project of anti-foundationalism (Fish, 1994, p. 291). Perhaps the explanatory power of the category can function even further to illustrate the nature of the relationship literary studies, a discourse community skilled at producing epideictic criticism and responsible for training young minds, has with the larger society in which

it functions. Like Gorgias in his "Encomium of Helen," today's literary scholars eloquently attempt to persuade their students of language's powers while also asking them to consider arguments unpopular, or unheard, in mainstream discourse.

Appendix A: Masterworks of American Literature Reading List

The students were assigned the following readings in this order:

Vladimir Nabokov, “Good Readers and Good Writers” (from *Lectures on Literature*)
Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken,” “Education By Poetry,” and “After Apple Picking”
Steven Johnson, "Metaphor Monopoly" (from *The New York Times* October 23, 1997)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from *The Stateman’s Manual*
John Bunyan, from *Pilgrim’s Progress*
Nathaniel Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” and "The Minister's Black Veil"
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “The Queen’s Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity” (from *Madwoman in the Attic*)
Anne Bradstreet, “The Prologue”
Phyllis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America”
Nikki Giovanni, "To Phyllis Wheatley"
Washington Irving, "The Devil and Tom Walker"
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"
T. Coraghesan Boyle, "The Devil and Irv Cherniske"
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Fate"
Annette Kolodony, "A Map for Re-Reading"
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno"
Annette Gordon-Reed, "Why Jefferson Scholars Were the Last to Know" (from *The New York Times* November 3, 1998)
William Saffire, "Sallygate" (from *The New York Times* November 2, 1998)
Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Jane Smiley, “Say It Ain’t So, Huck” (from *Harper's Magazine* January 1996)
T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”
Andrew Marvel, "To His Coy Mistress"
H.D., "Mid-Day," "Oread," "Leda," and "At Baia"
W.E.B. DuBois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*
Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist & the Racial Mountain,” "Young Gal's Blues," and "Morning After"
Countee Cullen, “Yet Do I Marvel”
Joe Wood, “Who Says a White Band Can’t Play Rap?” (from *The Village Voice* March 1991)
Flannery O'Connor, "Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction" and "A Good Man Is Hard To Find"

William Faulkner, “Barn Burning”
Gregory Gibson, "Our Violent Inner Landscape" (from *The New York Times* April 23, 1999)
Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*
Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

Appendix B: Purpose Questionnaire

Students were asked to respond to the following statements by rating their level of agreement on a four-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=somewhat agree, and 4=strongly agree).

1. The purpose of my paper is to explore my own ideas.
2. The purpose of my paper is to demonstrate my knowledge.
3. The purpose of my paper is to prove a point about something.
4. The purpose of my paper is to convince someone of something.
5. The purpose of my paper is to inform someone.
6. The purpose of my paper is to instruct someone.

Appendix C: Special *Topoi* Survey

Students were asked to respond to the following passages by rating how likely they think the passages is from an argument about literature on a four-point Likert-type scale (1=definitely not from an argument, 2=unlikely to be from an argument, 3=likely to be from an argument, and 4=definitely not from an arugment). Here, unlike in the questionnaire given to students, the source of the passage is indicated, as is the special *topos* the passage exemplifies.

Linguistics text:

1. A colleague has pointed out that, since the poem is written in the third person singular of the present tense, a high incidence of word-final 's' is inevitable. On one level, this is a chicken-and-egg question. Could one not equally argue that the poet may have chosen to write in the third person present singular precisely in order to enhance the alliterative effect? On the phonetic level, this objection is invalidated by the fact that the final 's' of the relevant words in the poem are mostly pronounced /z/: 'stands', 'sings', 'is', 'has'. (Krishnamurthy, 1995, p. 4)

Cliff's Notes:

2. Although the play is called "Othello," he himself does not appear yet. Instead, we are prepared for his later appearance by having our interest and suspense aroused by Iago's attitude towards him. Iago is the protagonist—the pivotal character, the one who takes the lead in any movement or cause. He begins the conflict between his evil and Othello's good, and so sets the play going. (Roberts, 1959, p. 7)

Linguistics text:

3. However, if in the same story a word like ‘in’ or ‘maybe’, or ‘should’ has a higher than average number of occurrences, this would be significant for more profound reasons—it will reflect choices we call stylistic. (Humble, 1995, p. 21)

Literary criticism, ubiquity:

4. In effect, the play calls into question—and hendiadys helps it to do so—all relationships, familial, political, cosmic, and even artistic. As a tragic hero of unprecedented intelligence and awareness, Hamlet doubts not only his own personal relationships and the relations of powers in a state but also the relation of human beings to the whole cosmos in which they live, the unity of one’s own personal identity, and even the relations of individuals to one another in conversation, in the dialogue of plays, in aesthetic roles. (Wright, 1981, p.179)

Literary criticism, appearance/reality:

5. It is not my intent to suggest that *The Wind in the Willows* is a universally serviceable paradigm for Victorian and Edwardian novels. For one thing, these simplified generalizations must stem in part from my own preoccupations as a critic and a person: primarily, the search for hidden meanings. (Steig, 1981, p. 323)

Literary criticism, paradigm:

6. The curious combination of Prospero’s real power and real impotence, both functions of his involvement in his own magical (here read “imaginative”) world, seems an excellent—and once one notices this pattern, inevitable—metaphor for the powers and limits of Shakespeare’s own imaginative world, and by not too forced an extension, art in general. (Miko, 1982, p. 9)

Cliff's Notes:

7. Two scholars come to Wagner to inquire about Faustus. Instead of giving a direct answer, Wagner uses superficial scholastic logic in order to prove to the two scholars that they should not have asked the question. After he displays a ridiculous knowledge of disputation, he finally reveals that Faustus is inside with Valdes and Cornelius. The two scholars then fear that Faustus has fallen into the practice of magic. They plan to see the Rector to “see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim” Faustus. (Fitzwater, 1967, p. 19)

Literary criticism, contemptus mundi:

8. Vian's entire novel is an explosion of light, a literal re-forming of our deadened world of abstractions: we have known the things he says: that the pills we take alter our chemistry and assert their molecular will within us, that we are enslaved by the powerful machines we build, that we do routine violence to the natural world, that our best energies and sap of life are channeled technically away, that organic monsters breed within our bodies and grow us into death, that the bond between people is, as Faulkner would say, a bond floated by the gods, that they may take away, not because we stop loving, but because we stop living. It is no news that our world is murderous and that our love for another opens us, more keenly than a blade, for suffering. We may have *known* our helplessness, but I am not certain that we have ever seen it in literature rendered this graphically. (Weinstein, 1981, p. 21)

Appendix D
Students' Take-Home Handouts for Workshops

TAKE THIS SHEET HOME WITH YOU AS A REMINDER OF THE STRATEGIES WE COVERED

Three Strategies for Writing About Literature

NOTES:

I. Appearance/Reality Strategy

II. Ubiquity Strategy

III. Paradigm Strategy

Your turn. Brainstorm ways to apply these strategies to the following argument:

In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," the narrator's husband prescribes a confining "rest cure" for his wife's diagnosed hysteria. The narrator's secret journal depicts a woman's reaction to a patriarchal society's strict control of women's thoughts and bodies.

TAKE THIS SHEET HOME WITH YOU AS A REMINDER OF THE STRATEGIES WE COVERED

MAINTAINING TOPIC: Three Strategies for Making Writing Flow

NOTES:

I. Same Subject Strategy.

II. Topic Hand-Off Strategy.

III. Preview And Shift Strategy.

Your turn. Practice the strategies by revising these passages:

4. Styrene monomer is an important compound used to manufacture plastics and

synthetic rubber. There is currently a large demand for this chemical; in 1986 it was a global 10-million-ton per year business.

9. In the U.S., freedom is considered a basic right of all Americans. The ability to make one's own choices and direct one's own path in life is the central idea of a free society. There are many decisions one makes and responsibilities one takes on in adulthood, in the process of putting an independent life together. The ones most crucial to our well being involve defining and maintaining the infrastructure that will support our daily existence and form a base for our goals and ambitions.

12. There are three forms of articles that are published in Physics of Fluids A: Fluid Dynamics. In addition to full-size articles that are usually 10-20 pages long, there are two shorter forms labeled Brief Communications (BC's) and Letters. While there is no preset limit on the length of the full-size article, and "Letters" can be no longer than 3 printed pages. The aim of BC's is to present important research of a limited scope. The time for processing the full-size articles and BC's can range from three to ten months, as I noted from the headings of a number of articles I read. The letter form is designed for rapid publication of the subjects of current importance. Therefore, there is a three-month limit for processing of letter manuscripts.

Appendix E
Students' Handouts for Workshops

Students were given a handout in each workshop that contained sample passages of student writing that were used to exemplify more and less successful applications of the strategies introduced in the workshop. The passages below appeared on these handouts. Here, unlike on the handouts, the passages are labeled according to what they were used to exemplify.

Three Strategies for Writing About Literature

Simplicity a possible value:

1. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a book that tells the story of a young boy on a "vacation" from his reality, nothing less, and nothing more. To me and millions of others, it is a great story of times now long past and kind of sentimental. We are all free to our own opinions, and mine is Mark Twain wrote the true Great American novel. Mark Twain, I believe, did not write the book as an example of slavery, it to me is just a story. Growing up in Illinois, I was raised with the stories of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer as moral tales. As far as realism, the dialects in the book are how people talked back then. In the backwoods of Illinois and Missouri, people were not that bright. There is no philosophical meaning deep down, just a book.

Complexity preferred value in literary studies:

2. "I see where you're coming from." We hear it all the time when we plead our case in debating, but sometimes it truly is where we come from that gives us our differences of opinions and ideas. The past's influence on character is a very important facet of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for the reader to grasp. Each character comes from a different upbringing, creating tension between and within individuals. These backgrounds form and shape the thoughts and actions of the characters, whether Huck's attitude towards African Americans or Jim's indictment of Solomon's intelligence. *Huckleberry Finn* reveals that what individuals believe to be right or true is very much molded by their environment.

Appearance/reality:

3. In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck, a young boy born and raised in the South, helps Jim, a runaway slave, to escape from his owner. To some, Twain may be telling a story of an influential youth who transcends the racial paradigm on which he has been raised by befriending a slave. In reality, Huck befriends no one, least of all Jim. While Huck does help Jim in his attempt to become a free man, to say Huck is a true friend to Jim is an exaggeration. Huck

maintains his vision of Jim through racist eyes and because of this, Jim shouldn't consider what Huck does for him as the actions of a truly compassionate friend.

Strong use of appearance/reality:

4. Through the poem "The Prologue," Anne Bradstreet expresses her frustration towards the opinion of women's writings in the male-dominated field of authorship. Her poem illustrates the common Puritan male belief that women were not allowed or able to venture into the world of literature and writing: "For such despite they cast on female wits." Puritans thought women, the poem specifically states, were considered better suited to menial tasks such as sewing. An attitude of unworthiness among women was encouraged through such male-chauvinist sentiments. Consequently, in order for "The Prologue" to be heard by the reading male Puritans, Bradstreet had to write with the air of humility expected of a woman. However, this seeming humility is only a mask covering her real frustrations regarding the putative authority of the men around her.

Weak use of appearance/reality:

5. Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker" exemplifies a specific behavior that is prevalent throughout mankind, a person selling their soul to the devil. In the story, Tom's personality remains unfazed even though he knows he has made the ultimate deal with the devil. Tom Walker is not just the main character of a fictitious story, he represents the natural tendency of greed in certain people.

Brainstorm possible appearance/reality applications:

6. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," the narrator's husband prescribes a confining "rest cure" for his wife's diagnosed hysteria. The narrator's secret journal depicts a woman's reaction to a patriarchal society's strict control of women's thoughts and bodies.

Strong use of ubiquity:

7. Huck's 19th-century Southern upbringing is most certainly a strong influence on his perception of Jim. Jim is nothing more than a slave, a possession, "Miss Watson's nigger, Jim." Even when speaking highly of Jim, Huck never considers Jim a human being equal to himself. Jim is "a mighty good nigger," but nonetheless, just a slave in Huck's eyes. Huck's primitive perception of Jim is further illustrated by his judgement of Jim's intelligence. One example of this occurs when…

Weak use of ubiquity:

8. In 1829, Washington Irving wrote "The Devil and Tom Walker," a tale of a miserly fellow who makes a deal with the devil who, in turn, makes him a rich man. In this story, Irving showed what being overcome with greed can cause people to do and what the consequences of these actions can be. Approximately 160 years later, T.

Coraghesson Boyle wrote "The Devil and Irv Cherniske," a rewritten version of Irving's story that is set in the more modern time of the late 1980s. In Boyle's story, greed is more evident. There are fourteen examples of the intensity of Irv's greed compared to Walker's, the materialism of greed, and the prevalence of greed in society, compared to the six examples in Irving's story. After over a century and a half, man has not learned his lesson, is still making the same mistakes, and his greed has gotten worse.

Brainstorm possible ubiquity applications:

9. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," the narrator's husband prescribes a confining "rest cure" for his wife's diagnosed hysteria. The narrator's secret journal depicts a woman's reaction to a patriarchal society's strict control of women's thoughts and bodies.

Good use of paradigm:

10. During the course of this semester we have read the work by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, the Metaphor of Paternity." In this work the authors define male representations of women in literature as either an angel or a monster. Gilbert and Gubar used mainly British works to justify their definitions. I wondered if their theory would hold true with any of the American authors of the 1800s that we have been reading. I chose a work by Washington Irving to support my claim that American as well as British authors utilized these definitions of a woman.

Better use of paradigm:

11. The Bible describes three different aspects of death. The first, being "physical" death--the perishing of our mortal bodies, is described in Hebrews 9:27. The second aspect, described in Ephesians 2:1, is called "spiritual" death. Ron Tewson, author of "Outreach: A Blueprint for Effective Personal Evangelism," explains spiritual death as the following: "a person can by physically alive although dead in his relationship to God" as a result of the separation caused by his or her sin. The final aspect of death is "eternal," this is explained in 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9. Tewson describes this as "separation from God in the torment of hell for all eternity." In understanding these three aspects of death, it is important to realize that if one dies physically while dead spiritually, one will experience eternal separation from God--Hell. Nathanial Hawthorne's piece, "The Minister's Black Veil," illustrates spiritual death and its ultimate outcome. The black veil, dauntingly adorning Mr. Hooper's face, represents the separation from God as a result of iniquity.

Brainstorm possible paradigm applications:

12. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," the narrator's husband prescribes a confining "rest cure" for his wife's diagnosed hysteria. The narrator's

secret journal depicts a woman's reaction to a patriarchal society's strict control of women's thoughts and bodies.

MAINTAINING TOPIC: Three Strategies for Making Writing Flow

Same subject:

1. Louisiana is not a large state. It ranks thirty-one in land area of all states. Despite its relatively compact size, it managed to import more than 305.6 million pounds of hazardous waste in 1983. In 1986, the state had 33.2 percent of the nation's total permitted hazardous-waste landfill capacity among active sites.

Passive voice can disrupt same subject strategy:

2. John woke up and puttered around as usual in the morning. He brushed his teeth and put on his clothes. The breakfast dishes were washed (passive--awkward) *or* He washed the breakfast dishes (active--better). He picked up his books and walked outside.

Passive voice can also facilitate same subject strategy:

3. John woke up as usual in the morning. He brushed his teeth and put on his clothes. He washed the breakfast dishes. He picked up his books and walked outside. Then a bus hit John (active--awkward) *or* Then John was hit by a bus (passive--better).

Brainstorm possible same subject applications:

4. Styrene monomer is an important compound used to manufacture plastics and synthetic rubber. There is currently a large demand for this chemical; in 1986 it was a global 10-million-ton per year business.

Topic hand-off:

5. One movie that really appealed to teenagers was Star Wars. It included countless zany, exciting special effects. One of the more impressive of these was a light saber. This lethal laser weapon once was used by awesome Jedi Knights. These Knights maintained truth and justice in their galaxies. But truth and justice were threatened by vile and ruthless creatures. These beings were led by Darth Vader, a sinister & merciless warlord. His goal was to destroy all the planets that refused to submit to him. The most important was Capricorn, the dune world. (Example from Willem vande Kopple.)

Topic hand-off

6. Despite its centrality to health care, only about 20 percent of health professionals study the principles and applications of ethical decision making. The ethical

dilemmas that students and practitioners face are becoming more complex in all areas of life. Much of this complexity stems from the sheer volume of ethics information within disciplines, the lack of information exchange across disciplines, and the proliferation of new medical technologies. The impact of new medical technology on social values still awaits study. Although the social significance of medical management is far-reaching, clinicians have yet to devote themselves to the ethical dimensions of health care as they have to the mastery of new health care technologies.

Topic hand-off can clarify misleading wording:

7. (Original) Designers have considered using active suspensions to resolve this conflict since the early 1960s. An active suspension uses a force generating device to replace the passive shock absorbers and/or springs. This device can theoretically react, under analog or digital computer control, to wheel and vehicle motions to provide a high quality ride with maximum handling ability.

8. (Revised) To resolve this conflict, since the early 1960s, designers have considered using active suspensions. An active suspension replaces the passive shock absorbers and/or springs with a force generating device. This device can theoretically react, under analog or digital computer control, to wheel and vehicle motions to provide a high quality ride with maximum handling ability.

Brainstorm possible topic hand-off applications:

9. In the U.S., freedom is considered a basic right of all Americans. The ability to make one's own choices and direct one's own path in life is the central idea of a free society. There are many decisions one makes and responsibilities one takes on in adulthood, in the process of putting an independent life together. The ones most crucial to our well being involve defining and maintaining the infrastructure that will support our daily existence and form a base for our goals and ambitions.

Preview and shift:

10. When faced with a choice between pension plans, workers need to break down the decision-making process into two areas: quantitative factors and qualitative factors. The quantitative issues have to do with the hard-core numbers, with the bottom-line question being: which of the two plans will give workers the most value when they retire? Qualitative factors include how well a worker can manage a large amount of money, as well as age, which is one of the most significant factors.

Preview and shift:

11. As I mentioned previously, a means to communicate within the office is also very important. I call this internal written communication and there are several types. The first type is INTEROFFICE communication which can take the form of memos, letters, and electronic mail. Memos are usually jotted down off the top of the head,

and are almost always directed to Mr. Senior's subordinates. Similarly, interoffice letters are hand written and informal although these are directed toward both subordinates and superiors. Both serve the mutual purpose of relaying bits of news, information, questions, and directives within the realm of the office. Electronic mail, called PROFS (Professional Office Systems) is useful for setting lunch dates, sending information to staff members, and setting up meetings. To use PROFS, Mr. Senior simply sits at his keyboard and sends spontaneous messages to another colleague's terminal. Mr. Senior pointed out that PROFS avoids 'telephone tag' with associates and is the type of writing he uses most often.

Brainstorm possible preview and shift applications:

12. There are three forms of articles that are published in Physics of Fluids A: Fluid Dynamics. In addition to full-size articles that are usually 10-20 pages long, there are two shorter forms labeled Brief Communications (BC's) and Letters. While there is no preset limit on the length of the full-size article, and "Letters" can be no longer than 3 printed pages. The aim of BC's is to present important research of a limited scope. The time for processing the full-size articles and BC's can range from three to ten months, as I noted from the headings of a number of articles I read. The letter form is designed for rapid publication of the subjects of current importance. Therefore, there is a three-month limit for processing of letter manuscripts.

Appendix F
Workshop Quizzes

Special *Topoi* Quiz

Students were told that the passages below were excerpted from student papers and were asked, based on our discussion during the workshop of effective argument strategies for an audience of literary scholars, which strategy, if any, the passages followed. For each passage, the students were asked to identify whether the argument follows the appearance/reality strategy, the ubiquity strategy, the paradigm strategy, or no strategy, which are here identified.

Paradigm:

A. According to Sandra Gilbert's "The Queen's Looking Glass," the key to identity, self-worth, and respect is the ability to voice your thoughts and opinions through not only speech, but also poetry and prose. In the late 1990's, a new form of music has gained the support of popular culture. This music, called hip-hop, is often referred to as the new urban poetry. Born out of the ashes of urban blight, this poetry is of a subjugated people. Hip-Hop embodies the arguments of self worth set forth by Gilbert. Hip-hop can link the modern female poetic voice to power. Lil' Kim, a well-known and respected female hip-hop artist, creates this link between creative expression and a woman's self respect in the refrain to her song, "Money Power Respect"…

Paradigm:

B. A mosaic in Constantina's fourth-century Church of Santa Costanza is described by Marilyn Stokstad, author of *Art History*, as presenting a scene of wine making that "would have been familiar to pagan followers of Bacchus (the god of wine), but in a Christian context could suggest the wine of the Eucharist. For Constantina the scene probably evoked only one, Christian, interpretation; her pagan husband, however, may have recognized the double allusion" (302). Thus spiritual belief is one of the factors that contribute to the way we see or even read things. Unfortunately, sometimes spiritual beliefs can blind a reader from other possible interpretations. My initial reading of Robert Frost's poem "After Apple Picking" illustrates how spiritual beliefs can cause one to be distracted from the author's possible intentions. Frost's word choices carry Christian connotations that immediately distracted me from other possible interpretations.

Appearance/reality

C. Throughout Melville's *Benito Cereno* I found it difficult not to view the white characters as sympathetic victims and the black characters as villains. Through Delano's eyes, the black characters are described as animalistic, treacherous, and murderous. And yet such a reading seemed too simple for this novel in which nothing is as it seems. The conclusion revealed to me that the moral of the story was not about the effects of slavery on blacks, but on whites. Melville does condemn slavery, but not in the way I had expected. He shows the damage done to the white characters with their own form of blindness and enslavement.

None

D. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is considered by many to be the end of the era when New England writers dominated American literature. It has been said that Mark Twain helped create a truly American style and form of literature. His use of the truly authentic language of his time is central to *Huckleberry Finn*. Twain incorporates half a dozen dialects in the dialogues carried on by different characters. His use of dialect helped end the need for American writers to use the more formal language associated with the British literature of the day. This drastic change of the norm helped define *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a masterpiece.

Ubiquity:

E. Of all the logical fallacies in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, "appeal from authority" is the most prevalent and can be seen throughout the story in Jim and Huck's relationship to Tom. Jim and Huck repeatedly adhere to Tom's wishes and take all he says for fact, never questioning his decisions or intent. Tom always has the final say in things as evident towards the end when Tom is planning Jim's extravagant escape. For, though "Jim couldn't see no sense in most of it, he allowed we was white folk and knowed better than him; so he was satisfied and said he would do it all just as Tom said" (230). This fallacy is also evident in Huck's adherence to Tom's authority. We see this in Huck's sense of inferiority to Tom's "style" (187) and in chapter 12 when Huck only investigates the steamboat after assuring himself that "Tom Sawyer wouldn't back out now" (84).

None:

F. As his autobiography describes, Douglass's life took a turn for the worse at fifteen, when deaths in his owner's family resulted in his return to the plantation. Douglass came to know his first real physical suffering as a slave. His new master, Thomas Auld, did not feed his slaves adequately and was exceptionally cruel. Douglass rebelled and was sent to the nearby farmer Mr. Covey, to be broke, or made submissive. Covey's strict rules and cruel punishments finally began to break Douglass's spirit.

None:

G. "The Yellow Wallpaper" is narrated in the form of a diary by an unnamed woman who undergoes a kind of rest cure as prescribed by her physician husband, John. The narrator, who must write in secrecy since her husband wants her to stay in bed and away from pen and paper, begins to see distorted shapes and figures in the room's wallpaper's design. By the end of the story, much to her husband's horror, the narrator has locked herself in the room and has taken to peeling off the yellow wallpaper in order to free the image of an imprisoned woman. When John finally enters her room, she is creeping along the walls, and when he faints, she merely steps over him and continues her strange task.

Ubiquity:

H. Nikki Giovanni in "To Phyllis Wheatley" asks many questions, most of which are never answered. However, in my opinion, Giovanni relates an idea important to our understanding of history throughout her poem, which is that women have been enslaved by the lustfulness of men. In the first stanza, Giovanni uses "kiss" in describing how "a little girl" might perceive the ocean running into "the blue sky." Next Giovanni uses "the children of Hester Prynne" to describe prostitutes. These are just two of the many examples

that illustrate how not even young girls are free from the lasciviousness passed down through the generations.

None:

I. "The Devil and Irv Cherniske" is a story about a man who loses his wife and family, all because of his greed for a superficial happiness. Because Irv has become wrapped up in the necessity for extreme material wealth, he begins to use some alternative and wrong ways to make money. Irv does this in order to pay off his home mortgage and to be able to afford all the luxuries his kids demand. Irv, always on the lookout for an easy way to make some money, learns from the devil that his neighbor has buried treasure in his backyard.

None:

J. What has literature done for J. Alfred Prufrock? Here is a man who has done a lot of wide reading, and as a consequence seems doomed to lead a loveless life of misery. T.S. Eliot's poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," presents a man who lives in a slummy part of town, but is accepted among the people of the higher classes. The poem is about whether or not he can and should "disturb the universe" to declare his love for an upper class woman.

Appearance/reality

K. Tom begins to go to church to shield himself from the devil. He becomes one of the loudest worshippers in the church and carries a pocket bible in his coat as a safeguard. Tom appears to have aligned his life with religion but it is only greed that causes him to take Christianity as protection against the devil. His bible thumping is actually an attempt to outsmart and cheat the devil out of his own deal.

None:

L. It's been approximately 75 years since Countee Cullen wrote the short poem "Incident." What's disheartening is that this poem could have been written only a year ago and would be just as appropriate and timely as it was back then. Racism is a devastating force that seems to have no end in sight anytime in the near future. This in not an essay, however, that suggests a solution to the problem of racism. What it is instead is a wake-up call to all those that think that racism has diminished with time and is no longer an issue to be dealt with.

Coherence Quiz

Students were told that the passages below were excerpted from student papers and were asked, based on our discussion during the workshop of effective strategies for maintaining topic, which strategy, if any, the passages followed. For each passage, the students were asked to identify whether the argument follows the same subject strategy, the topic hand-off strategy, the preview and shift strategy, or no strategy, which are here identified.

None:

A. I have lived all my life in Brooklyn New York. Park Slope is a neighborhood that has many

different ethnic cultures. Harmony exists among the people, even though it does not in many other Brooklyn neighborhoods. Many articles in the press have praised the Slope for its ethnic variety.

Preview and Shift:

B. There are many reasons to oppose a campus-wide ban on smoking. First, such a policy unduly penalizes an activity that, though obnoxious, is not, in fact, illegal. Second, enforcement of the policy might encourage insidious intrusions on the privacy of students in their dormitory rooms and faculty in their offices. Last, a ban on smoking might set an unfortunate precedent, leading to the elimination of other habits and activities certain groups regard as similarly offensive or harmful: drinking alcohol or coffee, eating fatty foods, dancing, listening to rock music, or even driving a car.

None:

C. Usually after the outline is completed, research must be done. Many books and papers are read, as well as articles from various sources. He also gathers information from various co-workers about the current marketing strategies and status of the client's project.

Same subject:

D. New York's Adirondack Park remains the largest park of any kind in the lower 48 states. It is larger than Yellowstone, Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and Olympic national parks combined.

None:

E. Many issues other than science, domestic politics in particular, faced Truman when he was considering the Oppenheimer committee's recommendation to stop the hydrogen bomb project. A Sino-Soviet bloc had been proclaimed by Russia and China, so the Cold War was becoming an issue. Support for Truman's foreign policy was shrinking among Republican leaders in Congress. And the first Russian atom bomb test made the public demand a strong response from him.

Same subject:

F. Vegetation covers the earth, except for those areas continuously covered with ice or utterly scorched by continual heat. Plants grow most richly in fertilized plains and river valleys, but they also grow at the edge of perpetual snow in high mountains. Dense vegetation thrives in the ocean and its edges as well as in and around lakes and swamps. Weeds and flowers even grow in cracks in busy sidewalks as well as on seemingly barren cliffs.

None:

G. All too often the lawyers chosen to represent capital crime offenders are either inexperienced, jaded, or unethical. The National Law Journal did a survey in 1990. What they concluded was that lawyers who represented death-row inmates in six Southern states had been disciplined, suspended, or disbarred at a rate of up to 46 times that of other attorneys in those states. Furthermore, the average length of a capital trial in Louisiana is three days. Even though it is in Louisiana where they have the highest rate of disciplinary action against death row trial lawyers. Even more shocking is the fact that these lawyers are

very inexperienced and under-qualified. The day of arraignment is the day when many lawyers initially meet the defendant and for many of those lawyers this is their first time handling a capital case.

Topic Hand-off:

H. Of all the wars in American history, none cost more lives than the Civil War. That terrible carnage is one reason for the lingering animosity between North and South today.

Preview and shift:

I. The children can then decide if they would prefer to eat a snack, listen to a story, or take a nap. Snacks offered are generally healthy ones, such as carrot sticks or raisins. The stories the caregivers read are also generally considered beneficial for the children because they relate a moral and celebrate values their American parents share. Naps are taken on mats and blankets in a separate, quiet room, decorated with cartoon characters familiar to them from educational TV programs shown on PBS.

None:

J. Many farmers are being hard hit by the increase in herd sizes in Pennsylvania. Due to the fact that more white-tail deer are occupying given areas, they are being forced to turn, more and more, to feeding on farmers' crops. The large deer herds have trouble finding enough food in the woods and grass fields to sustain themselves. The damage that the white-tail deer causes to farmers' crops ranges in the hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

None:

K. Word frequency refers to how often a word is used in the English language. All three patients showed striking frequency effects on the tests used in the previous chapter. Such effects of word frequency in tests tapping word production and comprehension are well documented. There are also single-case examples of frequency effects both in aphasic patients and in patients with semantic impairment. It has been argued that word frequency facilitates the access of phonological representations by semantic memory and consequently its locus of effect may be in or in access to phonological representations.

Topic hand-off

L. Some astonishing questions about the nature of the universe have been raised by scientists studying black holes in space. A black hole is created by the collapse of a dead star into a point perhaps no larger than a marble. The compression of so much matter into so little volume changes the fabric of space around it in puzzling ways.

Appendix G
Perception Questionnaire

After indicating which workshops they had attended, students were asked to respond to the following statements on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = none, 4 = neutral, 7 = very high). Space was also provided for open-end comments.

1. How would you rate your enjoyment of the workshop?
   A. Writing coherently
   B. Writing about literature

2. How would you rate your level of understanding of the workshop?
   A. Writing coherently
   B. Writing about literature

3. How helpful was the workshop for writing your two-page paper?
   A. Writing coherently
   B. Writing about literature

Students were then asked to compare the usefulness of each learning resource they used for writing their two-page papers on a 7-point Likert-type scale (0 = didn't use this other resource, 1 = much less useful, 4 = about the same, 7 = much more useful). Space was also provided for open-ended comments.

4. As compared to a teacher conference, the two Writing Workshops were:
5. As compared to going to the Undergraduate Writing Center, the two Writing Workshops were:
6. As compared to attending Professor Bremen's lectures, the two Writing Workshops were:
7. As compared to talking about the assigned reading in discussion section, the two Writing Workshops were:
8. As compared to talking with classmates outside of class, the two Writing Workshops were:
9. As compared to the Writing Coherently Workshop, the Writing about Literature Workshop was:

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